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Number 39

FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

The Splendor of Truth: A Symposium

Richard John Neuhaus Russell Hittinger
L. Gregory Jones David Burrell & Stanley Hauerwas
Robert P. George Hadley Arkes

Population Policy: Ideology as Science

Nicholas Eberstadt

Getting Real
Kari Jenson Gold

The Prince and the Pastor
Peter J. Leithart

Religion's Bad Press
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The Bible, Corrected
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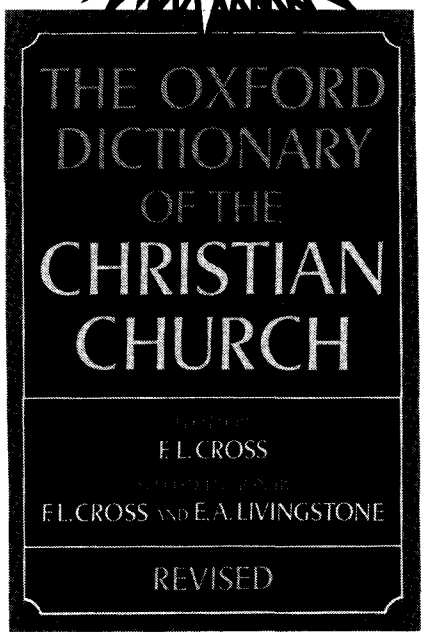

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

JANUARY 1994 • NUMBER 39

CORRESPONDENCE 2 *William J. Bennett, Charles Colson, John F. Baker, Tyler Hendricks, Thomas A. Hagan, John-Paul Morgante*

OPINION 6 *Kari Jenson Gold* Getting Real *Peter J. Leithart* The Prince and the Pastor *Stanley Rothman* Religion's Bad Press *Robert M. Price* The Bible, Corrected

ARTICLES 14 The Splendor of Truth: A Symposium *Richard John Neuhaus, Russell Hittinger, L. Gregory Jones, David Burrell & Stanley Hauerwas, Robert P. George, Hadley Arkes*

30 *Nicholas Eberstadt* Population Policy: Ideology as Science

BOOKS 39 *Charles L. Glenn* Battleground by Stephen Bates; *Benton Johnson* A Generation of Seekers by Wade Clark Roof and Beyond Establishment edited by Jackson Carroll and Wade Clark Roof; *Alan L. Mittleman* The Idea of Civil Society by Adam Seligman; *Dean C. Curry* Echoes of Discontent by Allen D. Hertzke; *John J. Miller* Immigrants and the American City by Thomas Muller and City on the Edge by Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick; *Edward T. Oakes* Love and Friendship by Allan Bloom; Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 57 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life by *Richard John Neuhaus*
This Month: In the Aftermath of Victory, etc.

Poetry by *Martha M. Vertreace* (13), *Luci Shaw* (68)

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Correspondence

An Exchange on Crime and Punishment

I was surprised by Charles Colson's criticism of my views ("Crime and the Cure of the Soul," October 1993), and I must respond to him. Because Mr. Colson is prominent in this debate, it is important to point out where I think he is wrong, both in terms of policy and philosophy.

Mr. Colson argues this "there is no relationship between incarceration rates and crime rates" and that "we have tried that [lock-'em-up] approach and it has failed." The evidence, and many of America's leading crime experts, argue otherwise. It is true that the number of people incarcerated is at an all-time high. *But the punishment rate for crime is near an all-time low.* Currently nearly three out of every four convicted criminals are not incarcerated and fewer than one in ten serious crimes results in imprisonment. In other words, crime does pay for an awful lot of criminals right now.

James Q. Wilson, widely recognized as America's foremost criminologist (and someone whom Colson favorably cites, twice, in his article) was recently asked what society can do in response to repair the "standard of collective morality" in America. Professor Wilson answered, "First, get over the notion that prison doesn't work, it fails. That's wrong. Prison takes people off the streets and we don't keep them off the streets very long." Wilson argues that putting more criminals in prison will reduce the crime rate. According to John J. DiIulio of Princeton University, a leading expert on prisons and punishment, "much evidence shows that imprisonment reduces crime. . . . The data leave no doubt that the increased use of prisons averted millions of serious crimes [in the 1980s]." Eugene Methvin, who has reported on the U.S. criminal justice system for more than forty years and who served (from 1983-1986) on the President's Commission on Organized Crime, has done extensive analysis on crime and punishment findings. His conclusion? "Lock 'em up and you slow 'em down. Turn 'em loose and you pay an awful price."

Mr. Colson assumes that because I believe that a more effective criminal justice system should include more prisons, judges, and prosecutors, I ipso facto oppose other criminal justice reforms. This misrepresents my position. Although I strongly believe we need more prisons, more judges, more prosecutors, and more police, I have never argued that nothing more needs to be done. I happen to agree with some of the reforms Mr. Colson advocates. In fact, one of them—alternative sentencing in the form of boot camp—is one that I advocated as "drug czar" and in *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators.*

One of the fundamental mistakes that Mr. Colson makes is his assumption that one cannot confront our culture's crumbling moral consensus while at the same time advocating criminal justice reform of the kind I favor. Here he demonstrates an "either/or" mindset. He fails to realize that one can both address the former and advocate the later. Not only are they not mutually exclusive, they are mutually reinforcing. There is an important moral component to punishment. As Stanley C. Brubaker of Colgate University has written:

> We should understand punishment as a kind of mirror image of praise. If praise expresses gratitude and approbation, punishment expresses resentment and reprobation. If praise expresses what the political community admires and what unites it, punishment expresses what the community condemns and what threatens it. Punishment, like praise, publicly expresses our determination of what people deserve.

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Colson makes much of the fact that the root cause of crime is a breakdown of the moral order. I agree. I also think that until the moral order is repaired and predatory criminals are reformed, we should keep them off the streets and behind bars. This is particularly important for inner city residents who are disproportionately victims of violent crime. When I was President Bush's drug czar I visited more than 100 communities, many of which were located in the worst parts of urban America. And what I heard more than anything else from those in the firing line were pleas for *more* cops and for *more* prisons because they wanted *more* safety. Often it is people who live in middle-class or affluent neighborhoods that are relatively free of violent crime who insist on holding a "root cause" seminar while people are dying in the streets. Professor DiIulio again: "It is reasonable to suppose that by doubling or tripling the number of officers on regular duty in and around drug-infested, crime-torn neighborhoods, and by deploying them in accordance with the precepts of community policing, the streets and sidewalks of even the most blighted inner city could be made safe enough for children to play and adults to stroll." Keep in mind, too, that we did not wait to eliminate the "root cause" of racism before going after it aggressively in law. Should the passage of the Civil Rights Act have been held up until we addressed the "root causes" of racism?

One of Colson's central aims in his writings is to undermine the belief that deterrence works. He argues that criminal behavior is not deterred by fear of punishment. This is nonsense. One of the reasons that smoking and drinking alcohol are so much more prevalent than drug use is precisely because drug use is illegal. Fear of being caught and punished is one of the reasons that, for example, more muggings and robberies occur in dark alleys than in police stations. And it explains why when there is a strong police presence in neighborhoods, crime goes down. If Mr. Colson would like to see this first hand, he should spend a few days with Reuben Greenberg, the police chief in Charleston, South Carolina. Greenberg's aggressive, no-nonsense approach—which relies on a visible and heavy police presence, particularly in public housing—has succeeded so well that the crime rate in Charleston is now at the same level that it was more than a quarter-century ago.

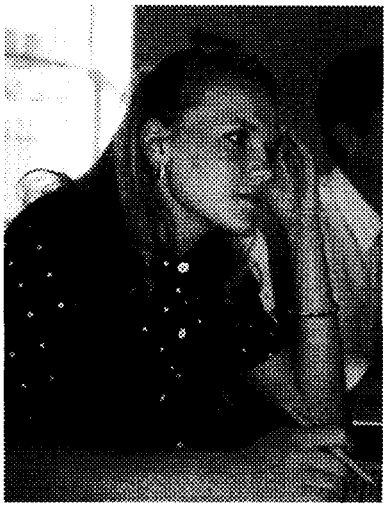
According to Mr. Colson, not only are conservatives' assumptions on crime and punishment flawed, so are their motivations. How is he so sure? Because, he says, "I used to write Richard Nixon's law-and-order policies. Conservative politicians who thunder 'lock 'em up and throw away the key' can always count on applause." Mr. Colson once wrote speeches whose major purpose was to win applause lines. But not all conservatives speak for that reason. Mr. Colson should not cosmologize his previous motivations; his history is not everyone's. He should consider whether, contrary to his own political experience, some people in political life say things not out of a desire for applause lines or even approval, but out of conviction. At least he might admit that possibility.

William J. Bennett
Washington, D.C.

Charles Colson replies:

When FIRST THINGS asked me to respond to the idea of building more prisons—one of the many proposals put forth in Bill Bennett's *Index of Cultural Indicators*—I looked forward to a friendly debate. Bill and I share the same philosophical framework and the same goals. We differ only in some of the strategies we endorse for reaching those goals.

When yet another Florida tourist is murdered by teenage thugs, and we learn that they all have a record



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of twenty and thirty previous arrests, we know there is something seriously wrong with our criminal justice system. On a very practical level, our prisons are so overcrowded that officials are cutting sentences to free up cell space.

The harsh irony is that murderers and rapists are being released early to make room for low-level offenders—people charged with fraud, forgery, shoplifting, minor drug offenses. What's the answer? Build more prisons? America already has almost as many people in prison as on active military duty.

Additional prison space can even act as a perverse incentive to pass more statutes and lock up more minor offenders. Prisons are like parking lots: as soon as they're built, more cars seem to appear.

A more economical course is to set up sentencing policies that keep dangerous offenders in prison for their full sentences—by moving non-dangerous offenders into alternative work programs on the outside. Alternative sentences such as house arrest, electronic surveillance, and community-based work programs keep minor offenders tied closely to the very things that motivate most people to straighten out: their families, jobs, and communities. It keeps their families off welfare and gives them a chance to pay restitution to their victims.

Not the least of alternative sentencing's benefits is that it frees up the prison space we so desperately need to lock up serious offenders who pose an imminent threat to society—and *keep* them locked up for a long time.

Every crime needs to be punished, but not every criminal needs to be punished the same way. Nondangerous offenders don't need to be warehoused in expensive prison cells. Placing them in community-based programs opens up prison space for truly dangerous criminals—the ones who are currently being released early to prowl the streets again.

Over the years, I have met literally hundreds of politicians who agree with these ideas in private and then deliver public speeches thundering *lock 'em up*. Bill Bennett does not fall into this category. He calls the shots exactly as he sees them and I have the highest regard for his sincerity and integrity. If anyone thinks that my comment on that point was aimed at him, I apologize.

Plausibility and Truth

Robert Jenson's essay, "How the World Lost Its Story" (October 1993), reminded me of a lesson I learned while I was completing a degree in creative writing. I had written a short story based on an incident that "actually happened" a year or two earlier. One element of this particular story struck my readers as implausible, although as I argued, "It actually happened that way!" My instructor—a realist in the mold of Hemingway—patiently pointed out to me that I was writing a *story*, not an *account*. When writing a story, he told me, it doesn't matter that something actually happened; it only matters that its occurrence is *plausible within the story*. I was confusing actuality with plausibility, the objective of philosophy with the objective of fiction. This is how I learned the meaning of the claim that truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction has to be plausible, whereas truth does not.

Professor Jenson asks, "How, in a world that entertains no promises" [a postmodern world], "is the Church to speak her eschatological hope with any public plausibility?" While I am no theologian, I believe the answer to this question is simple and unchanging: the Church's hope is not a question of plausibility and never has been. It is a question of faith—faith that the truth of Christ, for which he gave his life, points beyond the narcissism of plausibility to the one thing necessary for our fulfillment as cognitive and loving human beings. I can't imagine anyone with even a glimmer of insight into the meaning of Christ's life feeling that the "mordant laughter" of a Foucault or a

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Derrida is of much significance.

John F. Baker
Newberry, MI

If I understand him correctly, Professor Jenson is saying that Christianity is bound to revert to its pre-Constantinian status, as one option among many in a postmodern world of religious, cultural, and moral relativism. He makes a beautiful case for that unhappy conclusion.

But why should Christians give up God's claim on the World? Won't God provide a way? He always did in the past, didn't He?

Professor Jenson seems to embrace a cyclical view of history, rejecting every Christian philosophy of history that takes seriously the providence of God. The history of Christianity was not determined by social forces. It is not a history subject to academic prescriptions. It is symptomatic of postmodernism, really, to reason that socially things do not look very optimistic right now, so we had better jump back 1,600 years. . . .

Mr. Jenson seems enamored of the Eschaton, but sad to say he loves it as part of a story more than as a *mysterium tremendum* to be *realized in history*. The two-thousand-year history of Christianity played out exactly the logic of the Christian story, with its culmination in the Second Coming of Christ. The problem is that Christians did not learn from the example of Jesus that the Son of God comes *with a new story*. Mr. Jenson is too in love with the "preaching and teaching and hymns and prayers and processions and sacramental texts" to recognize that these are exactly a Christian version of pharisaism. To everything there is a season, and the late twentieth century is not the season to get sentimental.

Naturally in a postmodern world, a modest and undoubtedly temporary peace and security may obtain by everyone privatizing their stories, retreating into their enclaves. This would be to give over the public square to Samuel Beckett. But Mr. Jenson wisely teaches us that the world needs a God-centered story. He may hope that God's world-transforming love will again burst forth from the womb of the Church. I too maintain that hope, but if it is to happen, the old story will not be its vehicle. For one thing, it excludes Jews and Muslims. The intense antagonism between Jews, Christians, and Muslims is explained by the fact that they share the same characters but tell different stories about them. The messiah is the one with the new story, who illuminates and transcends these three stories, along with the Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and even secularist and feminist stories. His new story will be absolutely true to them all, because it is God's story disembellished of tribalisms. And it has a happy ending after all.

Tyler Hendricks
Vice President
Unification Church of America
Irvington, NY

On Evangelizing Liberals

M. B. Handspicker left me a little confused with his article "Evangelizing Liberalism" (October 1993). He seems to argue for maintaining Christian orthodoxy, but he says, "What leaves me dissatisfied with the beliefs said to be necessary for the creation of 'strong religious communities' is that they are relatively peripheral doctrines." These beliefs are apparently the ones set forth by Messrs. Johnson, Hoge, and Luidens in "Mainline Churches: The Real Reason for Decline" (FT, March 1993): (1) That Christianity is the only religion with a valid claim to truth, (2) that persons can be saved only through Jesus Christ and otherwise go to hell, and (3) that therefore one should try to convert others to the Christian faith.

To focus on only one of these beliefs, the second, does Handspicker really believe that salvation through Jesus Christ alone is a "peripheral doctrine"? "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). What doctrines would Handspicker consider central? It's small wonder that the mainline denominations are in decline.

Thomas A. Hagan
Scobey, MT

While reading M. B. Handspicker's "Evangelizing Liberalism," I was reminded of an old proverb about the exhibition of an elephant in a dark room to those who had never seen an elephant before. As seeing with the eye was impossible, each was feeling it in the dark with the palm of his hand.

The hand of one fell on the trunk, and to him the creature was like a water pipe. To the one whose hand touched an ear, it appeared to be a fan. Since another handled its leg, the elephant was a pillar. And so on.

As A. Graham Ikin suggests, "All of our cross sections of reality are like this. They are real points of contact with the whole that unites them. It is fruitless to waste time standing out for any particular finite viewpoint as exclusive or total, or quarreling with those who from another human viewpoint have seen another aspect. We need to pool our partial aspects of the truth, not ignoring others, nor depreciating or apologizing for our own, but accepting each as valid within its own sphere and making its own contribution to the integrated complexity of the whole."

This, along with the words of Mr. Handspicker, is good advice—as long as we do not miss the eternal aspect of the Scriptures and the absolute directives contained therein.

John-Paul Morgante
Austin, TX

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Opinion

Getting Real

Kari Jenson Gold

A few months ago my stepdaughter turned eleven. On the verge of adolescence, Stella wonders daily about the stuff of female life. Hair, clothes, boyfriends. Condoms, sexual harassment, abortion. A New York City kid's list of concerns is somewhat more bewildering than mine was at her age. At the same time, however, her school and community are full of information, advice, and opinions. There's no shortage of talk about "safe sex," "date rape," a woman's "right to choose." One might expect that Stella would be well on her way to womanly "self-esteem" and "empowerment." Her fifth grade class, at any rate, had the "women's issue" thing down pat. In 1992, when the school held student elections, only one student out of all the fifth grade classes voted for Bush. As Stella confidently informed us, "Republicans don't like women." Now while I've never been a registered Republican, I have certainly known some very nice Republicans—a few don't even beat their wives, or husbands.

Some assumptions are silly and easily corrected. Others are subtle and far more pernicious. They invade our language and our discussions, creating sound bites and effectively preventing thought. At the heart of the message of "empowerment," which my stepdaughter and her friends encounter every day, lies the image of woman as capricious little girl, forever victim, without real responsibility or real power.

Consider the notion of "safe sex." After all, many states now pass out condoms to fifth graders. Put aside, for the moment, the prevailing and appallingly condescending opinion that our children are not human beings with free will, but rutting beasts who will do what they will do. Stick to the phrase, "safe sex." "Safe" for whom? "Sex" for whom? Surely the two words are ludicrously contradictory? Sex can be many things: dark, mysterious, passionate, wild, gentle, even reassuring, but it is not safe. If it is, it's not likely to be very sexy. (I always envision that marvelous shot in *Naked Gun Part 2 1/2* of Leslie Nielsen fully encased in a gigantic condom.) How abandon oneself to another, how give your body into someone else's care and control, and remain safe? The world of "safe sex" is an exclusively male world of in and out. It's slam, bam, thank you ma'am, and to the extent it isn't, it isn't safe. It's a world without passion or foreplay, where the female is once again mere passive receptacle. Scared, cautious, tepid, always under control. Do I wish for Stella that she experience that kind of sex? No, I do not.

Some will say, would you rather she have unprotected sex and risk getting pregnant, risk death? I am foolish enough to hope that because we have talked openly and completely—not in half-truths and slogans—when she chooses to have sex, it will be with someone to whom she is committed and loves. Someone to whom she can say, "All that I have is yours," and to whom she can give of herself and her body freely, wildly, and without fear. But most of all, Stella deserves the truth. The rest is up to her. Sex is dangerous. It's supposed to be.

The women's movement has been, of course, very much behind the "safe sex" campaign just as it has succeeded in turning "date rape" and "sexual harassment" into *causes célèbres*. Colleges now have written regulations specifying that the sexual act must be explicitly and verbally consented to in order to prevent rape. The man must hear "Yes, I want to have sex with you" before the action may continue. One can only imagine the dampening effect of this bit of verbiage in the heat of the moment. But reality aside, the implication, of course, is that a woman is such a fragile and delicate flower she can be forced into anything by the big, bad male. She might not really want to have sex but is only doing it to please him. The reasoning behind such rules is a truly frightening combination of idiocy and genuinely chauvinist assumption. "Yes," it seems, is not enough, but "no" always means "no." Really. Tell that to Lord Darcy, Heathcliffe, Vronsky. On the one hand, we are asked to believe that women always know their own mind and say so (unlike the rest of humanity), and on the other we are told that women are so easily pressured into unpleasant acts that there must first be explicit consent. No wonder men are so confused.

But when distinctions are blurred and reasoning fuzzy, the real losers will be women. If so many situations can be interpreted as rape, then the real horror of violent rape is trivialized. A woman who drinks too much and ends up in bed with a man cannot later claim rape just because her thinking was blurred. A man who takes advantage of such a situation may be ungentlemanly but he is not behaving illegally. She cannot simultaneously claim to be a free, moral, responsible agent and not take responsibility for having consumed too much alcohol. Only if women do in fact see themselves as essentially weaker and inferior to men will they also interpret regret the morning after, or changing one's mind, or an unpleasant experience as rape.

Similarly, the brouhaha about sexual harassment has succeeded largely in blurring distinctions and trivializing the real problem. How draw the line between unsuccessful flirtation and sexual harassment?

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Surely the answer must be quite straightforward: when something specific (job, grade, award) is lost or threatened because he or she would not have sex. When this definition is broadened to include any number of situations, we become hopelessly and endlessly mired in the complexities of human relationships, and the genuine and all too common problem of authentic sexual harassment gets lost in the shuffle. If a woman is indeed so fragile that she cannot handle lewd or sexual comments and overtures, hateful though they may be, one can only advise her to stay out of the public square.

Here again, the women's movement has been behind the hype and hyperbole every step of the way. Indeed, one of its foremost heroines in recent history is Anita Hill. Young women everywhere are encouraged to see Ms. Hill as an inspiration and "role model." I, too, was grateful to Ms. Hill—for three days of riveting television—but I didn't believe her then and don't believe her now. Still, we will never know the full truth, so let us suppose for the sake of argument that everything she said was true. Is this, then, someone from whom to draw inspiration?

This is a woman who continued to receive promotions and assistance from a man who had lewdly harassed her, who took trips alone with him, and who, later, corresponded with him. More important, she allowed a man she considered to be guilty of sexual harassment to remain in a position of power and influence, a position that demanded a person of high integrity. She warned none of her female colleagues, informed no one in authority, about Thomas' behavior. This ambitious young lawyer kept her story to herself—thus subjecting who knew how many other women to similar treatment. When Ms. Hill finally did come forward, after years of silence during which Judge Thomas continued to rise in prominence, it was only at the end of his Supreme Court confirmation hearings and under enormous pressure from various interest groups. Even if one considers Ms. Hill's conduct from the most charitable position possible, one must still conclude that she is at best a coward, at worst a liar. Certainly the source of her fame is her status as victim. Is this really the message we want to send to our young women? (But then logic, that creation of dead white males, was never supposed to be our strong point.)

In perhaps the defining "women's issue," abortion, our vision of ourselves as victims produces an especially devastating result. Victims of nature, we feel entitled to wield what little power we possess over the real victim—the unborn child. Finally, we have found something so defenseless it cannot fight back, and we zealously guard our "rights" to that bloody power.

When we see ourselves as victims of nature rather than blessed participants, as victims of men rather than partners in life's complex tale, we harm only ourselves. Convinced of our own inferiority, we strive neither for virtue nor for love, neither for great deeds nor for caring families, but only for that empty substance, "empowerment." Only those who believe they truly have no power speak of being "empowered." We seek to create a bubble world in which everything is under our control, everything is safe. Sex can be safe and without consequences. Sexual relationships can be legislated, defined, wrapped up in bows—each of us experiencing the world hermetically sealed in Leslie Nielsen's giant condom.

Where should my stepdaughter look for help in charting the mysterious waters of womanhood? Wherever else, surely not in those pamphlets and self-help books so readily available. Not in the slogans and sound bites brandished everywhere like weapons. She will be far better served by listening to the voices of women past and present who speak with their minds and their hearts: women who search for truth in the very midst of the complexities of human relationships—not by avoiding or denying reality but by embracing it. Let her read, among many, many others, Madame de la Fayette, Jane Austen, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, the Brontes, Virginia Woolf, Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, Sigrid Undset, Margaret Mitchell, Dorothy Sayers, Margaret Drabble, A. S. Byatt, Mona Simpson. But first, she might start by rereading an old favorite, Margery Williams' *The Velveteen Rabbit.*

> "What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?" "Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real." "Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit. "Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt." "Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?" "It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

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The Prince and the Pastor

Peter J. Leithart

Eugene Peterson has commented on the unhappy fact that modern pastors have become "spiritual technologists" who reduce pastoral care to "running the church" and problem-solving. "The secularized mind," he writes, "is terrorized by mysteries." Those in its grip "deny or ignore the mysteries and diminish human existence to what can be managed, controlled, and fixed. We live in a cult of experts who explain and solve. The vast technological apparatus around us gives the impression that there is a tool for everything if we can only afford it."

As an alternative, Peterson suggests that pastoral care is an art that requires a poet's sensitivity to concrete detail. Along similar lines, Alasdair MacIntyre has said that novels are better guides to the surfaces and depths of human life than even the most refined statistical studies. Literature's ability to express the subtly layered dynamics of human interaction and motivation, its capacity to hold a mirror to nature, makes it a valuable tool in the development of mature pastoral care.

More than any other play, *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's mirror to nature. *Hamlet* is a notoriously knotted problem play. First, there are textual problems: editors must work from three early texts that vary widely in length and detail. Further, even the most complete text that can be constructed from the early editions has glaring lacunae and apparent contradictions. Aside from relatively trivial matters such as Hamlet's age and Horatio's nationality, major thematic questions are left unanswered. If, for example, Gertrude's marriage to Claudius was incestuous, why were Hamlet and the ghost the only ones to notice? It never becomes clear whether the ghost bears a message from heaven or hell, whether he is a redeemer or a tempter. What, moreover, did Gertrude know—and when did she know it? And, of course, there is the famed question of the prince's "delay," a problem for which critics have provided a plethora of medical, Freudian, and moral solutions.

The problems of *Hamlet* have led many critics to conclude that it was composed and revised in some haste. Especially in regard to minor details, this explanation of the play's rough edges is probably accurate. That Hamlet is thirty is not revealed until the final act, after four acts in which a reader will likely have envisioned a younger man. It seems plausible that Shakespeare's conception of Hamlet evolved, and that the texts we possess fossilize disparate elements from various stages of the evolution. Lacking time and perhaps the inclination to tie up loose ends, Shakespeare left *Hamlet* as it was and moved on to other things.

Whatever the plausibility of this explanation, there are also clear signs of careful composition. The doubling of character types (Gertrude and Ophelia as "unfaithful" women; Hamlet's and Ophelia's madness), even tripling (Hamlet, Laertes, and Fortinbras as vengeful sons; Claudius, Polonius, and King Hamlet as fathers) tie together what might have become a labyrinth of minor plots. Dead fathers keep turning up, a ghost at the beginning and corpses in the middle and at the end. The appearance of Fortinbras in the first scene and, triumphantly, in the final scene provides an ironic *inclusio* on the theme of revenge. Imagery of traps, secrecy and spying, "poison in the ear," serpents and gardens harness minor scenes and speeches to the main action of the play. The intricate interweaving of themes and imagery belies T. S. Eliot's judgment that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure.

Given these indications of unity, one might offer a more sympathetic interpretation of the play's anomalies. Instead of "contradictions" and "loose ends," we could style them "mysteries" that serve the overall thematic purposes of the play. On this interpretation, difficulties are not problems to be solved, but devices to enrich and deepen the play's realism. Holes give the play its depth.

In particular, the unanswered questions reinforce one of the major themes of the play—the opacity of the human heart. The reasons for Hamlet's delay, after all, are hidden not only to the reader but to Hamlet himself. Hamlet's soliloquies are full of bewildered self-reproach. When the First Player weeps for the fictional Hecuba and when Fortinbras risks death in Poland for "an eggshell," Hamlet asks himself why he has not acted on the ghost's instructions, but never answers his own interrogation. As Cedric Watts explains it, Shakespeare seems to have deliberately avoided providing an answer so as to "generate the sense of a deep, inaccessible region in Hamlet's nature." Watts adds that modernist literature and criticism has abandoned the traditional assumption "that if a character asks a big question about his own nature, the text is obliged to supply the answer." Modernist critics are therefore comfortable with the conclusion that "the function of such a question may be to draw attention to the absence of an accessible answer."

Hamlet drives home a similar point in the pipe-playing scene with those two irritating ciphers, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. When Guildenstern protests that he cannot play the pipe, Hamlet rages: "You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet you cannot make it

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speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?"

It is *Hamlet*'s emphasis on what has been called the "incomprehensibility of man" that makes the play something of a cautionary tale for the modern pastor. Of course, as Thomas Oden points out, when a parishioner asks his pastor for counsel, he has a right to expect a specific, and a specifically Christian, answer; Christians should not shrink from claiming that, at least on the biggest questions, they have *the* answer. But in an age dominated by technique, *Hamlet* is a healthy reminder that the care of souls is not a mechanical matter of input and output, and pastoral counsel is not a question of applying a handful of rules. The infinite variety of human pain cannot be redeemed by the application of twelve simple steps.

Curiously, the most anti-secular of American Protestants have often been the quickest to adopt the latest "scientific" techniques in pastoral care or church growth. Shakespeare's play informs the evangelical pastor especially that understanding, much less guiding, sinful humans is an exceedingly complex, frustrating, difficult, all but impossible proposition. The cure of souls is difficult because the disease of the soul runs deep and takes myriad forms. Hamlet would doubtless have resonated to the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick. Who can know it?"

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Religion's Bad Press

Stanley Rothman

> *"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.*
> — Alice in Wonderland

Are journalists irreligious, and does this affect their coverage of religious news? For some years a number of media critics have been arguing that such is the case. Early in September 1993, in an obvious effort to counter such critics, the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University published *Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media*, a study by John Dart and Jimmy Allen, based on a survey of the views of journalists and religious leaders about press coverage of religion. (The survey was conducted by Robert Wyatt.)

The work of S. Robert Lichter, Linda Lichter, and myself, especially our book *The Media Elite* (1986), figures prominently in *Bridging the Gap*. The authors conclude that we are responsible for much of the contemporary misunderstanding of media coverage of religious news. As John Seigenthaler, the Chairman of the Freedom Forum, notes in his introduction to the study:

> Data compiled by Dart, Allen, and Wyatt provides valuable information that should serve to destroy another false impression about the media: that its members are basically irreligious. This erroneous view grew out of a limited, misused, and misunderstood survey known as the Lichter-Rothman study. . . . The false impression that study created has festered as coverage of religion has continued to focus almost exclusively on conflict and controversy. That survey was based on interviews with only 240 of the several thousands of journalists who work for seven major news agencies in two cities, Washington and New York. Because 86 percent of those 240 journalists told the researchers that they seldom or never attended religious services, the Lichter-Rothman survey has been read as finding that the national news media is irreligious. . . . In fact there are news media representatives in Washington and New York who are offended by the suggestion that their religious faith, or lack of it, is represented by the 240 Lichter-Rothman interviews.

In the September 8, 1993 *New York Times*, Peter Steinfels reported on the survey and assumed that its results provided a corrective to our earlier findings.

The authors of *Bridging the Gap* are better informed than Mr. Seigenthaler, knowing as they do that a random sample of 240 journalists is perfectly satisfactory if the universe of those being studied consists of several thousand. After all, most regularly conducted surveys of the 250 or more million inhabitants of the United States rely on samples of 1,200 respondents or less. Indeed, Messrs. Dart and Allen agree that our findings probably describe "East Coast" reporters accurately. Their expressed concern is that our data have been taken by others to apply to journalists as a whole, and they argue that we, too, sometimes imply that our results are applicable to all American journalists.

In our study we asked journalists, "What is your present religious preference?" Half those interviewed replied "none." On the other hand, the authors of the Freedom Forum Study report that only 4 percent of the managing editors they surveyed chose that response, as did only 9 percent of the religion reporters

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surveyed. On the basis of that question and another that asks respondents how important religion is to them, Allen and Dart conclude that reporters are as religious as the general public.

Before comparing our study with that of the Freedom Forum, we should describe its nature and purpose. The truth is, the study of journalists' religious attitudes and reporting of religious news was not a central concern of our work. *The Media Elite* was the first of a series in a project of which I am the director. My colleagues and I are studying various elite (leadership) groups in the United States, including journalists, businessmen, military officers, and bureaucrats, as part of an attempt to understand contemporary social change. The theory underpinning this approach borrows from Max Weber, Daniel Bell, Harold Lasswell, and Robert Dahl, among others.

Since the appearance of *The Media Elite,* the Lichters, now co-directors of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, and I have published a variety of books and articles about other leadership groups and are writing a volume placing our work in historical and theoretical perspective. In addition, I am, with two other scholars, completing a systematic study of changing social and political themes in motion pictures, a study that includes Hollywood's treatment of religious matters.

Thus, in writing *The Media Elite,* we were not concerned in particular with journalists' coverage of organized religion (though the Lichters later completed a study of elite media coverage of the Catholic Church), much less the "fairness" of that reporting—a very difficult matter to evaluate. Rather, our concern was to understand the nature and causes of the changes taking place in American journalism and to discuss these in nonjudgmental terms. Our treatment of the religious attitudes of journalists is part of a comprehensive profile of their backgrounds and attitudes. *Bridging the Gap,* on the other hand, is a full-scale study of journalists' religious beliefs and their relation to the coverage of religion. The two studies, therefore, are not strictly comparable. Nevertheless, they can be juxtaposed for the purpose of understanding the differences between some of their findings and ours.

The major difference between the two studies has to do with the population sampled. We did not merely interview "eastern" reporters. We interviewed journalists at what were, at the time, the country's leading media outlets. These were the *New York Times,* the *Wall Street Journal,* the *Washington Post, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report,* the three television networks, and PBS. One need not belabor the importance of these outlets: the selection was dictated by scholarly studies demonstrating their impact on elites and the general public. Seventy-four percent of the people we chose for our sample completed the full interview.

Wyatt, by contrast, mailed questionnaires to a sample of members of the Religion News Writers Association, and members of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association. As Dart and Allen note, the managing editors who responded are decision-making executives on newspapers in small to midsize cities. No television broadcasters were surveyed. The response rate for the editors was only 48 percent. When the response rate is this low, survey researchers routinely conduct follow-up interviews to help determine whether those who responded hold attitudes different from those who did not. (For example, a belief that religion is important may be correlated with a willingness to fill out and return a lengthy questionnaire on this topic.) Unfortunately, Dart and Allen do not appear to have followed this standard research procedure.

Even if one does not question the accuracy of the results they obtained (more on that later), Allen and Dart are comparing apples and oranges. Our sample is a far better indicator of the attitudes of important journalists than that sponsored by the Freedom Forum. Religion writers—according to the authors' own findings—are responsible for covering no more than 30 percent of stories on religion in papers like the *New York Times.* Frequently they cover routine events in special sections of the newspapers for which they work, and are not widely read. Further, it is really difficult, in this day and age, to believe that managing editors of newspapers in small and medium-size cities are the real movers and shakers in the media.

John Dart and Jimmy Allen assert that other studies support their views. However, they mention only one systematic survey of a national sample of journalists, i.e., that of David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Willhoit. The other commentators they cite offer only opinions or anecdotal evidence. For some reason the authors, throughout the study, weigh the opinions of persons they consider knowledgeable observers no differently than they do systematic evidence. Further, they fail to comment on the many studies that support our general findings, several of which are summarized in our book, including the well-known *Los Angles Times* Survey (1985). (Incidentally, Lichter analyzed the Weaver-Willhoit results. The views of journalists at the leading media outlets in their sample were not very different from those in our sample.)

In summary, the findings of the Freedom Forum study differ from ours in part because its organizers and authors studied something else. Readers must decide for themselves which group of journalists it is more important to study if one wishes to understand the nature of the American mass media and the messages it conveys.

In addition, they and we asked somewhat different questions. We simply asked for current religious preference and left it to the respondents to answer as they wished. The comparable Freedom Forum survey question was broader in some ways and more con-

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stricted in others. Respondents were asked, "What religious category do you currently belong to or are most closely associated with?" The questionnaire offered a number of alternatives including the vague term "mainline Protestant." The only nonreligious response permitted was "nonbeliever or humanist." It is reasonable to believe that non-observing editors are less likely to choose that alternative than a simple "none."

Thirty-five percent of their editors state that religion is personally important to them. However, no questions were asked about church attendance. *Pace* Seigenthaler, church attendance, for Christians at least, is a good measure of commitment to organized religion.

One final note on Dart and Allen's critique of *The Media Elite*. At one point the authors intimate that our use of the term "media elite" is an attack on journalists designed to discredit them. But surely, as educated persons, they know that elite is a widely used term of art in both sociology and political science. Our study is part of a tradition concerned with the role and influence of various leadership (elite) groups in our society. No one has ever suggested that we are being insidious when we describe the results of our studies of the business elite, the bureaucratic elite, etc.

Bridging the Gap has other weaknesses. The Lichters completed a carefully designed and methodologically sound systematic study of elite media coverage of the Catholic Church. In the Freedom Forum study, Dart and Allen do not deal directly with their work, but rather cite others who argue that the Lichters' study was not sufficiently nuanced, at least in part because a substantial proportion of the stories covered noncontroversial matters, something the Lichters themselves point out.

The authors' treatment of the Lichters is not untypical of their handling of related issues. In discussing actual news coverage they give roughly the same weight to systematic evidence, anecdotal evidence, and "knowledgeable" opinion. However, one can find anecdotes that prove almost anything, and those whom we regard as knowledgeable are often those who agree with us—or at least there is that danger.

Even when they cite the few supposedly systematic studies at their disposal, Dart and Allen make no effort to evaluate the methodology of such studies. For example, was the scoring blind? What were the coding categories? Did more than one coder score the stories? What was the level of coder agreement? The Lichters are always careful to report this information. Their (and our) codebooks are publicly available, the scoring is blind, and high levels of multiple coder agreement are required, usually .80. This care is necessary if the studies cited are to be considered seriously.

Bridging the Gap is a peculiar study in other ways. Citing commentator after commentator, the authors conclude that religious reporting is not what it should be. They are not quite sure why, but initially they argue that ours is a secular society. In such a society reporters, like others, do not regard religion as all that important; they are ignorant of religion rather than hostile to it. In other sections of the study, however, Dart and Allen make a rather different case. A few brief quotes will give the flavor of their argument.

> Millions of Americans are attuned to spiritual matters. . . . For most people, faith is a spiritual melody that gives meaning and definition to life. . . . Yet, many journalists are tone deaf. To them, religion in all its complexity is either a disturbing cacophony of sounds or innocuous background music easily tuned out. (p. 7)
>
> To the extent that the news media unthinkingly reflect secularized culture and discount the validity of committed beliefs contrary to secular culture, coverage of religion and religious influences sinks below journalism's own standards of fairness and insightful perspective. (p. 17)
>
> Religion news finds no niche on TV and normally receives superficial treatment—a formula that too easily leads to blandness or mischaracterization. News broadcasters are no less assimilated into a secularizing culture than are press people. (p. 21)

The authors then quote Bill Moyers who argues that journalists are not biased. Rather they are simply ignorant. Thus Moyers notes, if you want to discuss religion on national television, "you get people who are offended by the parochialism of the very idea. I just don't see any way to do it on the national level." (p. 21)

In contrast to their earlier statements, the authors now seem to be arguing that journalists, whatever their professions of religious belief and its importance to them, are essentially secular persons *who have no feeling for the beliefs of most Americans to whom religion is important.* Consequently they fail to understand institutionalized religion in its own terms and describe religious activity in ways that are inaccurate—if, that is, they describe it at all.

In other words, Dart and Allen's analysis seems to differ little from ours. It is not clear, then, why they criticize our work. They prefer the word "ignorance" to the word "bias." We, too, do not like the word bias. In our analysis of how journalists treat various issues we have always emphasized that their reporting flows out of certain assumptions about "reality," which, with the best will in the world, sometimes lead them to report events inaccurately. As Dart and Allen describe the situation, the ignorance they ascribe to the journalists is associated with a certain indifference if not some hostility toward organized religion. At first blush, then, Dart and Allen's difference with us would seem to boil down to a question of terminology.

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Actually, the key issue between us is rather different. However, in order to understand what that issue is we must examine the general reception given *The Media Elite* by journalists and professors of journalism.

That reception has been checkered. *The Media Elite* is a carefully wrought social science study, and academic reviews have, on the whole, been favorable. We relied on a random sample and a variety of traditional measurement instruments that command respect in the profession, as well as a few we designed and tested ourselves for use in the study. Our language in the book is nonjudgmental. We make no recommendations.

We believed that we had demonstrated, both by our questionnaire and careful content analyses, that journalists, as hard as they may try to be accurate, allow their own views to determine what "news" they cover and to some extent how it is reported. Since journalists are "liberal cosmopolitans," coverage, over the long haul, and in ambiguous situations, tilts in that direction.

When our study was discussed in more general periodicals and newspapers the responses were usually, though not invariably, unfriendly. The *Columbia Journalism Review* entitled a sharp critique of our work by Herbert Gans "Are Journalists Dangerous Liberals?"—not exactly an accurate description of our analysis. Gans has continued to pursue our efforts in essays in which he attacks us personally as being involved in some sort of sinister conservative plot.

Some newspapers whose staffs we surveyed even denied that the interviews had taken place. Ben Bradlee of the *Washington Post* claimed that he had asked many journalists on the *Post* if they had been interviewed, and only one said yes. The Washington Bureau Chief of the *Wall Street Journal*, Al Hunt, also denied that interviews had been conducted with his staff. Barry Sussman, the *Washington Post* polling expert, asked us for additional computer runs, clearly designed to check whether responses to other questions fell into a plausible pattern. Fortunately, the interviews for the study (and coding of the results) had been conducted by *Response Analysis*, a highly reputable survey firm, and charges that the study had been faked were soon dropped. In addition, the data we sent to the *Post* must have been persuasive. We never heard from them again.

What sin had we committed? It was simply this: we had presented solid evidence that journalists were not simply objective professionals with a social conscience, but that they, like everyone else, perceived and described the world in terms of a particular Weltanschauung. They did not stand above the fray. They were part of it. Such an argument is, of course, *lèse majesté*. Journalists do not have thin skins—they have no skins.

The truth is that, for reasons nicely outlined by Daniel Bell in the mid-1970s, the cultural elites, including journalists, are still at the cutting edge of a cultural revolution that is transforming America. This revolution involves indifference (and sometimes hostility) toward many traditional institutions, including religious institutions. As is the case with other liberal cosmopolitans, criticism from what is perceived of as the left does not seriously bother journalists. Those on the left are believed to have their hearts in the right place, even if they are not always practical. On the other hand, criticism from what are seen, accurately or not, as conservative sources is not to be countenanced, for they are among the seriously misinformed, if not wicked, of the earth. Thus, to return to *Bridging the Gap*, criticisms by a bona fide liberal like Bill Moyers are acceptable, while those by, say, Michael Novak are less likely to be so.

One final word. I begin to wonder to what extent journalists' attitudes will be measurable in the future. As they become increasingly conscious that they, too, are under the microscope, will they, like other subjects of experiments, begin to respond in ways that project the image they wish to project? My guess is that increasingly they will. Indeed, as a recent study demonstrates, this is already occurring in Germany, where scholars are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain reliable responses to social and political questions from journalists.

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The Bible, Corrected

Robert M. Price

1 Corinthians 6:9 Do not be deceived. Neither sexists, nor racists, nor ageists, nor looksists, nor ableists shall inherit the People's Republic of God.

Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written concerning me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms and the Koran and the I Ching and the Upanishads and Zulu tribal sagas and *The Color Purple* must be fulfilled."

Matthew 23:25-26 Woe to you, hypocrites of any denominational affiliation! Visually challenged fools! How can a sighted person lead one visually challenged? Will he not patronize him?

Mark 9:14-29 And one in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has Satan's Syndrome; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but

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they were not able." And Jesus said, "O generation that lacks positive imaging! Bring him to me." And later when he had entered the house, the disciples asked him, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said, "Because of your narrow-minded reliance on Western medicine! This kind cannot be driven except by carob therapy."

Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26 Behold a ruler came and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter is ontologically challenged; but come and lay your hand upon her, and she will live." And Jesus rose and followed him. And when he came to the ruler's house he saw a tumult, and a multitude weeping and wailing loudly. And he said to them, "Why do you weep? Know ye not that death is but the final stage of growth?" And seeing where the child was, he went in and laid his hand upon her. And she sued him for sexual harassment.

Matthew 5:27 You have heard it said by the dead white males, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say unto you, whoever looketh upon a woman as a sex object hath committed sin and should hasten to make himself a eunuch for the People's Republic of Heaven's sake.

1 Corinthians 13:4-13 Justicelove is impatient; it taketh no crap; it insisteth on its own way. It giveth no quarter to denominational bureaucrats; it shouteth down; it condemneth not the gay, forbeareth not the straight. Justicelove believeth all things are ok if they serve its ends. Justicelove never ends; as for scriptures, they will cease; as for the family unit, it will pass away; as for moral norms, they will end. For our ideology is imperfect, and our rhetoric could use a little work, but when liberation comes, the patriarchal, oppressive notion of perfection will cease. When I was a victim of false consciousness, I spoke patriarchally, I thought patriarchally, I reasoned logocentrically. When I came out of the closet, I put away patriarchal things. So liberation, conscientization, and justicelove abide, these three, and none of these is the greatest because that would be elitism.

Matthew 26:26-29 Now as they were eating, Jesus took multigrain bread, and blessed it, and nonviolently broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Comrades, take and eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks to the Goddess, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the Second Testament, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of guilt feelings. I tell you I shall not drink of it again until that day when I drink it without sulfites in the People's Republic of God."

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Night Growth

The snow stuns the sky into quiet
only the lake understands,
restive beyond the grey stone breakwater.

Across the street, my neighbor knows
a green hope weaves a wooden trellis
over a fresh-powdered walk, his jacket,

a plaid patch on the shed doorknob.
His brown daughter sprouts bud breasts
under her sweatshirt; twirls tendrils

of dark braids, then steadies the plank
with both hands as her eyes follow
his hammer's arc.

*

In her, I am twelve
again, New Year's Eve: my mother and I
sleep early—she, in their pink room,

I where my brother and I share bunks,
walls not repainted pre-war blue
when we move in, little floor space

for second-hand chairs, desks,
chests-of-drawers. Weak springs
give as sheets twine her ankles.

Pillowing in premature wishes,
we fear silver bullets
in my neighbor's pistol, his bayou way

of killing earthbound ghosts
when the old year dies,

*

and so it goes.
The last slats nailed in place,
the girl trails her father into a house
aflame with saffron light of melting snow,

holy surprise getting past the silence.
A nighthawk perches sideways in the ash
like a bundle of wet leaves, unfurls

her wings, then lifts into air
I thought too cold for flight.

Martha M. Vertreace

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The Splendor of Truth: *A Symposium*

Richard John Neuhaus

In October 1993, Pope John Paul II issued his tenth encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth). The tabloids blazoned that the Pope is clamping down on sexual ethics. And yes, it turns out that he hasn't changed his mind on fornication and adultery, but that is rather to miss the point of this extended and closely reasoned argument about the nature of morality. Other reports focused on his criticism of ethical theories that go by cumbersome names such as "proportionalism" and "consequentialism." That is closer to the point, but still doesn't quite get it. *Veritatis Splendor* is much more than a pontifical salvo in intramural disputes among moral philosophers and theologians. Of course the argument should be read in its entirety. That is made easier by the fact that, maybe for the first time in this pontificate, a major document has found a translator who writes clear and felicitous English.

In this document, the Pope offers not so much an analysis of the world's moral condition (which we all know is in a very bad way) as an examination of why we moderns no longer make moral sense to one another. Making sense assumes that there is some truth about the matter in dispute. But when it comes to morality, it is widely assumed today that there is no such thing as truth. Indeed, "moral truth" is thought to be an oxymoron. You have your "values" and I have mine, and there the discussion comes to a screeching halt. "What is truth?" asked Pontius Pilate. He, like many of our contemporaries, took that question to be a discussion-stopper. John Paul II argues that it ought to be a discussion-starter.

Modernity, he notes appreciatively, has been very big on freedom. But now freedom has been untethered from truth, and freedom cannot stand alone without degenerating into license. License, in turn, is the undoing of freedom, for then, as Nietzsche and others recognized, all personal and social life becomes simply the assertion of power. If freedom is to be secured, power—and freedom itself—must be accountable to truth. Or, as John Paul puts it repeatedly, "Authentic freedom is ordered to truth." This, he emphatically insists, is not a new idea. The central text for *Veritatis Splendor* is the word of Jesus, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32) From the giving of the Decalogue at Sinai, from Aristotle through to the American Founders ("We hold these truths to be self-evident . . ."), it has been thought that there is a necessary connection between freedom and truth. The apparently new thing about our time is the proposal that freedom can get along without truth. That proposal, John Paul argues, is intellectually unconvincing, spiritually incoherent, and morally disastrous.

Clear thinking about moral truth founders on the rocks of relativism and subjectivism. In a radically individualistic culture, we do not discern and obey what is objectively true. Rather, each of us decides what is "true for me." We *create* the truth. This, however, is really not so new, according to the Pope. It is a way of thinking and acting that began with that unfortunate afternoon in the Garden of Eden and has resulted in herds of independent minds marching toward moral oblivion with Mr. Sinatra's witless boast on their lips, "I did it my way." The "postmodernist" twist on this is to argue that all morality is created by culture. We are socially constructed, it is said, "all the way down." Freedom may be high among your "values," but that is only because you are the product of a culture that values freedom. Ergo, your freedom is a delusion. In fact, you are as captive to your culture as somebody else who is the product of a culture that values collectivism, or child sacrifice, or whatever. John Paul knows these arguments inside out, but he is not buying.

The human person, he contends, truly is free. He is created for freedom and, although hindered by the

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wound of sin, he is capable of freedom. That is the truth about the human person without which all talk about morality makes no sense. John Paul readily acknowledges the insights of psychology, anthropology, and the behavioral sciences into the ways we are "conditioned" by culture, genes, and factors yet unknown. But deep within each "acting person" (a key phrase in the thought of this Pope) is an aspiration toward the good that he either follows or defies. *Veritatis Splendor* opens with an extended and intriguing reflection on the rich young man who comes to Jesus and asks, "Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16) That, says the Pope, is the question of everyman, no matter how tentatively or confusedly it is asked. And the answer of Jesus is the answer to everyman, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." Life is to know the truth and do the truth. In the Christian account of things, life is ultimately fulfilled in following the One who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)

But, it may be objected, this is impossibly ethereal and offputtingly religious. Anyway, there is no going back to "simpler days" when it was possible to assert that "we hold these truths" as though there are actually truths to hold, and to be held by. We live in a pluralistic society; there is no agreement on what truths we hold; and so forth. Just so, says John Paul, and that is precisely why we need so urgently to engage in argument about the truth that undergirds human freedom and dignity. Our differences notwithstanding, we can make sense to one another because we have in common our human nature and the capacity to reason, and these are universal. The Pope is keenly aware that in contending for universal nature and reason he is going up against regnant views in many of our elite institutions—views that have metastasized with remarkable virulence in popular culture. As freedom has turned against itself, so also reason has turned against itself, with the result that confidence in what is distinctively human has been severely undermined.

The idea that at the end of the second millennium the Catholic Church has turned out to the premier institutional champion of humanism and reason in the contemporary culture will strike many as improbable, if not preposterous. They should read *Veritatis Splendor* and other writings of this philosopher Pope. Or, for that matter, they might consult again, or consult for the first time, Augustine and Aquinas. John Paul is for sure no friend of "secular humanism," nor is his defense of reason to be confused with the truncated and reductionist rationalism of the Enlightenment *philosophes*. True humanism, he contends, is directed toward the transcendent, toward the ultimate good, who is God. And reason participates in the fullness of truth through revelation. But to those who are made nervous by references to God and revelation, the Pope is saying in this encyclical that we still have a lot to talk about. And we had better get on with it before humanity staggers more deeply into the night of moral nothingness. Some might think John Paul's sense of urgency slightly apocalyptic; others, more alert to the intellectual and cultural drift of our time, will welcome his argument as a bracing call to reaffirm reason and human dignity in the face of nihilism both theoretical and practical.

Human rights and duties, says the Pope, are "universal and immutable." That is the position the United States has taken against countries claiming that the idea of universal human rights reflects the "cultural imperialism" of the West. In fact, such countries may have a case. The human rights agenda is no more than an ideological imposition by the West, *if* the cause of freedom is divorced from the claims of truth. The contention that there is no objective or universal truth has achieved a measure of official status among us by fiat of the Supreme Court. In *Planned Parenthod v. Casey*, for example, the Court declared that it is up to each individual to determine "the concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." John Paul, by contrast, warns against "the risk of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism." When truth itself is democratized—when truth is no more than the will of each individual or a majority of individuals—democracy, deprived of the claim to truth, stands naked to its enemies. Thus does freedom, when it is not "ordered to truth," undo freedom.

Moral truth, evident in a "natural law" that is accessible to all reasonable persons, includes commands both positive and negative. But not for nothing are most of the "ten words" delivered at Sinai framed in the negative. We cannot always do the good that we would, but we can always refuse to do evil. Some acts are intrinsically evil, evil per se—always and everywhere, without exception. As examples, the Pope cites homicide, genocide, abortion, slavery, prostitution, and trafficking in women and children. He quotes Pope Paul VI: "Though it is true that sometimes it is lawful to tolerate a lesser moral evil in order to avoid a greater evil or in order to promote a greater good, *it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it.*" Evil must never be called good, nor good evil.

Here John Paul takes on those moralists, including Catholic theologians, who say that an evil act may be justified by the end to which it is directed ("consequentialism") or by weighing the other goods at stake ("proportionalism"). It is never licit to do evil in order to achieve good. To those of a contrary view the question might be put: When is rape morally justified? Or the torture of children? Or Auschwitz? John Paul's answer is *never*. Intentions may be noble, people may claim that they are acting "in good conscience," circumstances may mitigate personal responsibility, but the act remains, always and everywhere, evil.

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The moral person is prepared to die rather than do evil. The words of the Latin poet Juvenal, says John Paul, apply to everyone: "Consider it the greatest of crimes to prefer survival to honor and, out of love of physical life, to lose the very reason for living." The encyclical includes an extended meditation on the meaning of martyrdom, drawing examples from the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, and the chronicle of courageous resistance to tyranny. Martyr means witness. We are not all called to martyrdom, but we are called to bear witness to the truth that makes, and keeps, us free. And that, according to *Veritatis Splendor,* is the splendor of living in the truth.

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Russell Hittinger

Predictably, *Veritatis Splendor* has been received by Catholics in North America as an issue of ecclesiology, or perhaps more accurately, of ecclesiastical politics. But the chief issue raised by *Veritatis* is not the juridical and pastoral authority of Peter. Nor is it just the authority of "objective" moral norms. Rather, at its deepest level, the encyclical concerns the authority of a tradition. *Veritatis* is a work of intellectual unity of the sort we have not seen in this generation.

For the past century, more or less, the disciplines of philosophy and theology have grown apart, fracturing into various professional sects which produce, at best, a melange of partial perspectives. The "professionalization" of those disciplines makes it difficult to imagine, much less to achieve, a properly organized and unified body of sacred theology. Fragmentation of knowledge has its causes in the institutions of the culture generally, and neither the progressive nor conservative parties within the Church are to blame for the situation. However, to the extent that Catholics lack a common intellectual tradition, the unity of the Church becomes more rather than less dependent upon juridical authority. Progressives deeply resent such exercises of authority, but if the truth be known, their own role in failing to maintain an intellectual tradition has contributed to the problem they now find so intolerable.

The father of the modern encyclicals, Pope Leo XIII, anticipated the problem of the disintegration of the Church's intellectual tradition. In the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), he urged intellectuals to restore the "nature, form, and genius" of theology. Today, *Aeterni Patris* is regarded as a bid by the papacy to dictate curricular matters in seminaries. The Leonine reform was not entirely successful in overcoming the dominion of textbook scholasticism—a form of theology that was a parody of the scholastic tradition. Yet Pope Leo can be credited with seeing that the Church could not afford to enter modernity without a strong and coherent intellectual tradition. In contrast to Pius IX, Pope Leo understood that modernity is not so much a story of "errors" as it is a story of destructively one-sided positions, incapable of either representing the Church's tradition or of satisfying man's thirst for the truth.

Leo and his successors wrote encyclicals in order to *teach.* The encyclicals were not intended to be exercises of juridical authority independent of a common intellectual culture. That the encyclicals are now so widely received as intolerable or, in any case, as inappropriate applications of papal authority indicates the extent to which the situation has deteriorated. For the most part, the deterioration has been on the receiving end.

However, the encyclical tradition has its own share of limitations. Encyclicals have treated a wide array of modern problems, including the condition of labor, constitutional rights and democratic political institutions, the family, health care, reproductive technologies, abortion, euthanasia, war, etc. Simply as intellectual exercises, some have been profound, even prophetic; others have been mediocre, but useful for conveying the Vatican's position on issues of the day. Leo himself did not anticipate that the encyclicals might indirectly (certainly unintentionally) exacerbate the very problem addressed in *Aeterni Patris*: namely, that the teaching of the Church would tend to be communicated and received piecemeal, and that matters of policy and controversy would tend to overshadow the systematic wisdom of the Catholic tradition.

Like some of the documents of Vatican II, the encyclicals usually have practical or pastoral purposes. Fundamental principles are cited only insofar as is needed to address the problems at hand, or perhaps to remind the faithful of what everyone believes. More often than not, the various genres of Vatican documents assume rather than fully explicate the unified body of doctrine that stands as the substructure of the particular problem or policy. Unfortunately, this steady stream of teaching documents unintentionally habituates Catholics to the notion that theology is done on the wing, as it were. Each new encyclical is received as a kind of policy statement in which the Church announces some "new" position, which is then sifted by various experts and bureaucrats as grist for their own projects. We should bear in mind that for the past quarter-century encyclicals have been issued for a Church that (until this past year) has had no common catechism, much less a common curricu-

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lum in its seminaries and colleges. Even the best encyclicals are no substitute for a *summa* or a catechism.

Hence, the problem of partial and seemingly transitional perspectives has not been alleviated by these teaching documents. No encyclical suffered more from this limitation than did *Humanae Vitae* (1968). Even its staunchest supporters admit that the full philosophical and theological picture is not presented in the document—which, after all, is virtually a pamphlet. Lacking an educated sense of the whole tradition, a contemporary reader of *Humanae Vitae* cannot be expected to make much sense of teaching against contraception. One needs to see how the affirmation or negation of a proposition at one level carries implications for propositions at another level, and why a seemingly minor issue can have profound implications for the whole of a system. At some point, one needs systematically to explore the foundational principles by grafting them onto (to paraphrase Alasdair MacIntyre) a "tradition of inquiry."

More than any other encyclical, *Veritatis* presents the tradition in a complete way. It exposes the interlocking parts of the tradition, and indicates why certain teachings have their respective emphasis and place within the whole. At the outset of *Veritatis*, the Pope writes: "Today . . . it seems necessary to reflect on the whole of the Church's moral teaching, with the precise goal of recalling certain fundamental truths of Catholic doctrine which, in the present circumstances, risk being distorted or denied." This document is not a pamphlet. It does not assume that the reader has an educated sense of how all the parts fit together (which is striking in itself, since it is addressed to the episcopacy). Analysis and argumentation proceed from, and back to, the foundations. At the same time, the synthetic work is properly articulated and differentiated in the light of precisely drawn definitions and distinctions. If we take the century of modern encyclicals according to their logical rather than temporal order, *Veritatis* should be regarded as the first of the encyclicals. In conjunction with the new Catechism (cited several times in the encyclical itself), *Veritatis* represents a significant step on the road to rehabilitating and communicating the tradition.

Above all, the encyclical shows that moral theology cannot be done adequately by submitting the tradition to the partial, shortsighted, and usually reductionistic perspectives of the professional guilds of ethicists and policy analysts. These guilds have not only abandoned the ideal of a unified body of doctrine, but command no consensus or authority within their own ranks. Peter Hebblethwaite sarcastically remarks that *Veritatis* is "a document so timeless as to be almost out of this world." More accurately, it is a document that has such coherence that one detects immediately that it was not produced by the world of professional ethicists. It is "timeless" in the sense that the moral life is presented with sufficient completeness that the mind must either give or refuse its assent, and must do so on the basis of something more than a few isolated propositions about controversial issues. This is a refreshing and ennobling timelessness.

The deeper issue still is whether the professionalization of "ethics" has created for itself a subject matter immune from divine order. As the encyclical puts it, the notion that there exists an immanent and exclusively this-worldly set of values limits the authority of the Church "to proposing an exhortation . . . which the autonomous reason alone would then have the task of completing with normative directives which are truly 'objective,' that is, adapted to the concrete historical situation." No particular theologians are named, and perhaps no prominent Catholic theologian has ever gone so far as explicitly to reduce authority to pastoral exhortation, or to propose that the human world is immune from divine norms. However, the Vatican has every right to point out where moral theologians have adopted methods and conclusions that subvert the possibility of moral theology by sequestering an area of human action from revelation and from divine norms.

Nothing in the traditional repertoire of moral theology and philosophy has been more vulnerable to this distortion than the subject of natural law. One or another version of "natural law" is typically used, like jujitsu, to undercut the tradition from within. It is said that the Church has always recognized the claims of reason and the integrity of nature. Even as the ethicists dismiss as irrelevant to their work the metaphysical grounds of either reason or nature, they devote themselves to moving as many propositions about action as possible into the sphere of an autonomous discipline of "reason." Although "natural law" long ago ceased to have any precise meaning or authority for secular thought, it has been used as a rubric to justify a domain of issues and questions over which the tradition of the Church has no competence or authority. Regrettably, some of the previous encyclicals (by this Pope included) have fallen into the trap of speaking of natural law or natural rights in a way that assumes something very nearly the opposite of what contemporary ethicists have in mind. It was high time that the Church paid closer attention to the context and meaning of natural law talk.

There is much that can be said about *Veritatis* and the concept of natural law. In sum, it takes a step backward into the tradition, and thereby takes a great step forward in intellectual rigor and clarity. I will limit my remarks to a couple of points. In the first place, there is an issue of semantics. In his remarks on the tenth anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*, Cardinal Roy proposed that "natural law" ought to be replaced by "modern synonyms," e.g., "man, human being, human person, dignity, the rights of man or the rights of peoples, conscience, humaneness in conduct,

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the struggle for justice . . . and the 'quality of life'"—all of which can be "summarized in the concept of 'values.' " These are not, however, synonyms for the concept of natural law. Rather, they equate the moral law with human nature itself. No doubt, Cardinal Roy's remarks were sincere, but they provide no clear vocabulary for distinguishing between the moral measure (the law) and what is to be measured (human action). *Veritatis*, on the other hand, clearly presents natural law in Augustinian and Thomistic terms as a participation in the Eternal Law, or as a "participated theonomy."

Throughout *Veritatis*, the Pope argues that "natural law" does not denote immanent biological or psychological "nature," but rather signifies the divine source of moral norms, imparted by creation, and expressed in the rational structure of human judgment and action. In other words, natural law is real law. The very words imply that man is not, *ab initio*, his own legislator. Better than any encyclical since *Rerum Novarum*, *Veritatis* adopts a clear and consistent rhetoric of natural law. The misleading and imprecise language of recent encyclicals has been corrected.

The issue, of course, is not merely semantic or rhetorical. It also concerns the conceptual framework of both distinguishing and integrating faith and reason, nature and supernature, secular history and the economy of divine laws. The Pope argues that the existence of natural goods and values does not mean that natural law constitutes a "boundary of human morality," on one side of which human reason exercises autonomous evaluation and choice. In this respect, it is misleading (though not entirely incorrect) to equate natural law with "objective" moral norms, for there are any number of philosophical systems that subscribe to moral "objectivity" as well as to a doctrine of the autonomy of human practical reason. To his credit, the Pope does not succumb to the temptation to translate natural law into an all-purpose idea of "objective" moral norms. Rather, he constantly returns to the contrast between autonomy and participated theonomy.

The Pope explores this theme so well because he does not allow himself to get cornered into moral epistemology. He does not assert that we begin to know the moral order by first knowing, in a philosophical way, the entire metaphysical picture. Rather, he argues that our grasp of binding moral norms gives "witness" to the truth that in the *ordo rerum* man is not his own measure. Hence, by distinguishing between the ground of the truth and the act of knowing the truth—or, to employ the encyclical's language, between the light and what is illuminated—the proper ontological ground of conscience is clarified, and conscience is rescued from being entrapped in psychological and epistemological puzzles.

Within the limits imposed by a work of this kind, the Pope does a remarkable job of presenting the different sources and arguments for the deeper conceptual framework of the Catholic tradition. In terms of the clarity of its organization, the elegance of its exposition, the intelligence of its distinctions, and the synthetic power of its argument, *Veritatis* realizes the ideal of *Aeterni Patris*. But the Pope does not merely rehearse the commonplaces of scholastic theology. He improves upon them. For example, his treatment of the Christological meaning of the natural law is superior not only to anything in contemporary Catholic literature on the subject, but also to the work of the neo-Thomists of the pre-conciliar era. His interpretation of Genesis 2:17, concerning the Tree of Knowledge, is brilliant, not only as an exegesis of the scriptural text, but also as a commentary on modern notions of an autonomous natural law.

Critics of *Veritatis* claim that Catholic moralists do not deny these truths, and that the Pope sets up a straw man when he targets certain unnamed theologians. While it might be true that there is some misunderstanding on this or that proposition, I do not think that the Pope misrepresents the deeper and more troubling point of division. The *National Catholic Reporter* of October 15, 1993, for instance, finds scandal in the fact that the natural law is defined in terms of the Creator, for this implies that "Christian morality is heteronomous." The *NCR* opines that the theocentric account of the natural law contradicts the Church's custom of not imposing one school of philosophy or theology on the faithful—as though the ground of truth is to be left indeterminate by philosophy and theology, and as though the traditional claims of a divine order merely represent one method or school alongside others. For his part, Peter Hebblethwaite declares that the encyclical "makes sense" *only if* a "heteronomous" standpoint is adopted—that is, the papal argument makes sense only if we assume that a divine ground of truth cancels the liberty and integrity of human reason. In short, Catholic morality is true only if it gives a false account of morality.

But the main point of the encyclical is that the dichotomy between autonomy and heteronomy is false, and that it has no ground in either faith or reason. The Pope repeatedly argues that moral norms of the natural law and the Gospel are not the impositions of an alien authority, but rather come from a creating and redeeming God who directs and perfects human agents in their innermost being. Human reason is naturally structured to recognize that its origin and end are in communion with God. If straw men are to be exposed, it is the Pope who does the exposing. The encyclical shows the weakness of the autonomist position—both as a philosophical position and as a plausible candidate for making sense of the Catholic tradition. While it would not be fair to identify all contemporary moral theologians with the narrow and vituperative statements of the *National Catholic Re-*

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porter, there does seem to be a "chasm" (as Hebblethwaite puts it) between those who regard moral reasoning as autonomous and those who work systematically within the theocentric tradition.

For the sake of intellectual honesty, we should set aside the issue of juridical authority. It distracts us from the main problem. At stake in *Veritatis* is not the authority of Peter, but the truth or falsity of a tradition. If the encyclical is mistaken about the authoritative sources of its reasoning, if it is wrong in its distinctions and arguments, if it does not accurately note what is of faith or of reason, if it has indeed consigned the moral life to abject heteronomy, then the issue of juridical authority is moot, for there would be no tradition in which such authority could be exercised. Perhaps the conceptual framework of *Veritatis* can be improved, and this or that argument perfected. In the meantime, however, I can't see anything on the horizon that rivals the encyclical. As regards the Catholic tradition, this encyclical is the genuine item.

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L. Gregory Jones

The audacity of this Pope! He is audacious, though not primarily because he dares to criticize positions that have become regnant in some quarters of modern philosophy and theology, or because he dares to employ notions such as truth with reference to moral questions. Such features of the Pope's argument are important, indeed crucial, but they are neither the most central nor the most striking ones.

Nor, despite some media discussion and the wailing and gnashing of teeth heard from certain quarters, is the Pope's audacity to be seen in some mysterious reassertion of (a) traditionalist morality, (b) hierarchical authoritarianism, or (c) repressive dogmatism designed to stifle dissent and disagreement. Such assertions require strong, and indeed one is tempted to say willful, misreadings of the document.

Rather, the Pope's audacity is to be seen primarily in his unambiguous argument that God, and more particularly theology, ought to be at the center of questions about how we should live. After all, doesn't the Pope recognize—as any "good American" should—that religion is what one does with one's solitude? That it is okay to be religious, as long as you keep those convictions private? Doesn't the Pope recognize that if you inject God into polite discussion, much less public discussion and debate, you are likely to be taken as either a fundamentalist or a madman (if there is to be a distinction between the two)? Yet the Pope shows his true evangelical colors in not only mentioning the "G-word" in polite company, but actually asserting that this character identified as God ought to be central to discussions about how people ought to live. How dare he!

Beginning, as the Pope does, with the question asked of Jesus by the rich young man—"what must I do to be saved?"—is a stroke of rhetorical genius. It not only places a theological question at the beginning of the encyclical, it also introduces both Jesus and the Bible as players in the moral arena. Further, the Pope's analysis suggests that the theological issue of salvation ought to guide our conception and description of moral questions. It places such questions in the context of a teleologically ordered theological inquiry whose focus is God.

Thus God does not serve simply as an object for my personal spirituality, or as the articulation of the depths of my being, or as a cipher designed to sanction that which I was already planning to do anyhow. Rather, God is the object of inquiry about the entirety of my life, of our lives, and indeed of the whole Creation. Such inquiry affects—indeed ought to shape—the very ways in which the questions are asked. But should we expect anything less from a tradition whose central credal affirmation moves from "I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth" to "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen"? Christian convictions about the Triune God are not to be compartmentalized into the spiritual, the private, or even the religious. They have to do with all that we have, and all that we are.

The Pope's use of the exchange between Jesus and the rich young man structures the argument of the encyclical in other significant ways as well. Three examples. First, he uses the rich young man as a metaphor for people more generally, suggesting that questions about how I ought to live, and more particularly what I must do to be saved, are being raised not only by Christians but by others as well. The ways in which those questions are asked may differ (not all religious traditions aim at salvation, Christianly understood), and they may be formulated in more or less inchoate ways. But the Pope presumes that such questions are of more than idle interest, relevant to more than theological specialists or evangelical preachers; and here he undoubtedly taps one of the crucial issues facing a world that, as Robert Jenson has recently suggested in this journal, seems to have lost its story.

Secondly, the opening question both introduces Jesus and the Bible as players in the moral arena and is a sign of the centrality of both in the overall structure and argument of the document. This contextualizes the references to natural law in relation to the overall Christological claims about Creation and the law of God. It also reflects an important concern for the lives of ordinary believers. Neither Jesus in particular, nor the Bible in general, displays a preoccupation with saintly people; though all are called to be saints, there is a relentless desire not to abandon

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anyone, and in particular to seek and save the lost, the confused, the marginalized.

Thirdly, despite the fears of some that the Pope is simply reasserting traditionalist morality, hierarchical authoritarianism, or a repressive dogmatism, the encyclical as a whole is structured as a form of theological *inquiry*. This is true from the rich young man's opening question to the concluding doxology to Mary. To be sure, positive claims and judgments need to be asserted, developed, and defended; otherwise, a tradition would have very little to offer either to its adherents or to the world. But as the Pope proceeds through his critical engagement with a wide variety of issues, his analysis moves—in good Thomistic fashion—through appreciation for the strengths of a style of theological inquiry and the insights that it offers, to criticisms of its weaknesses, concluding with a judgment about the overall direction that moral theology ought to be taking. Such a style seems poorly chosen if the intent of the encyclical is to stifle dissent or disagreement; for indeed, the encyclical's structure and argument is an invitation to join in the rigorous, yet life-giving, demands of a comprehensive theological inquiry ordered by, and directed towards, the truth as that is discerned in fidelity to the God of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

How dare the Pope be so audacious as to reclaim the centrality, and even the supremacy, of theological inquiry in the modern world? He dares to do so because Christians in general, and theologians in particular, can afford to do nothing less if we are genuinely lovers of, and seekers after, the truth. It is unfortunate, though perhaps also a confirmation of the theological bankruptcy of our culture, that the early reactions to the encyclical have so often completely ignored its theological focus.

Even so, each of the strengths identified above has a correlative question or set of questions that might be put to the encyclical's perspective. First, there is an important ambiguity about the Pope's use of the rich young man as a metaphor for humanity. In the biblical story, the rich young man is not simply an earnest human being; he is a righteous Jew who is familiar with the law and the prophets. While this Jew's conception of fidelity to Jewish law *may* also be identical to a Roman Catholic conception of natural law, the Pope's movement back and forth between the rich young man as Israelite and as "everyman" needs greater conceptual clarification.

Further, the rich young man's obvious formation in the traditions of the law and the prophets stands in rather stark contrast to the biblical illiteracy of many Christians. We live in a culture where people are more likely to associate Amos with the maker of chocolate chip cookies than with the biblical prophet, and more likely to attribute "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s oratorical brilliance than to Amos' fidelity to God's command. In that sense, perhaps, we need not only the encyclical's invitation to theological inquiry but also, and perhaps more determinatively, a reclamation of biblical and theological *imagination*.

Moreover, the encyclical's emphasis on the claims of the Gospel on everyone, and especially ordinary believers, is laudable. Even more, the emphasis that the radical demands of the Gospel may require some of us to be martyred for our faith is not only laudatory but extraordinary in a culture where so may of us seem intent on avoiding death at all costs until we end up dying for nothing. But, somewhat surprisingly, the encyclical does not adequately emphasize the relationship between politics and the virtues of character for ordinary believers in social circumstances where martyrdom is not likely to be demanded of them. Ironically, despite the sustained attention to the exchange between Jesus and the rich young man, the Pope barely glosses the answer Jesus gives. It is an answer cast not in terms of altering beliefs, but in terms of renouncing possessions in order to be free to join the community of disciples: "Go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

Finally, while the encyclical rightly emphasizes both the claims to truth that must be made and the ongoing inquiry characteristic of Christian theology, how confident should we be that we *know* the truth? Is it only a matter of needing to seek out and discover "the most adequate formulation" for universal and permanent moral norms, as the encyclical states, or is it also a question of needing to seek out, discover, and continue to struggle to articulate precisely what those norms are? This is obviously a question that will vary from norm to norm, and believers need to embody the virtue of practical wisdom in this process. But with reference to our claims to truth and our search for truth, in what sense do we see, but through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12)? In more technical terminology, is moral theology better understood teleologically or eschatologically?

I take it, however, that such questions are less a challenge to the Pope's teaching than a reflection of the theological engagement that he not only encourages but requires. For if questions about how we should live, and what we must do to be saved, inevitably involve theological or anti-theological judgments, then we need nothing less than to describe and debate the issues with a theological seriousness that is rarely seen in modernity. Thank God for the Pope's display of the virtue of courage in service to the Truth which we all should, and perhaps in some sense do, seek.

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David Burrell & Stanley Hauerwas

Writing on the media coverage of the Pope's visit to Denver this past August, Peter Steinfels (in his capacity as religion writer for the *New York Times*) noted that reporters are adept at writing about events in an old way, but seem stymied by the genuinely new. The language they have been provided in their briefings by the experts sets them up to look for certain things, which they proceed to find and to comment on; but what happens when those very experts are outflanked by something fresh in the event itself? And that, after all, is what events have the capacity to unleash.

In this case, an accomplished media person—Steinfels—sensed something happening in Denver, especially to and among younger people, which outstripped the tired clichés about polarizations within the Catholic Church that the experts had prepared the journalistic Pope-watchers to look for. Others of us who heard about the event in Denver from certain eyewitnesses were able to catch something of their inspiration: at the person of the Pope, and at the way he had incarnated what they believed and what had come to animate their lives of faith. All of the observations of cultural anthropologists about pilgrimage—the need to see and to touch and to do so in the company of others—seem fulfilled in this dual-pilgrimage scenario: the Pope journeying to meet young people while they journey to meet him. And what has always fascinated cultural anthropologists about pilgrimage—from Chaucer on—is the way unexpected things happen.

Something analogous is taking place with the publication at last of the long-touted encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. Its reputation had preceded it: the experts having generated an ominous foreshadowing of papal excoriation of unacceptable positions—and even the threat that John Paul II might up the ante to a declaration of infallibility. With those fears in the foreground, however, commentators had a difficult time finding items to focus on, since the encyclical's argumentation is dense and its scolding muted. That did not, however, keep the BBC from remarking that the Pope had reasserted "rigid Catholic morality," either because such was already their image of Catholic morality, or of the Pope, or both.

The text, however, outflanks all the commentators, sounding a genuinely inspirational call to link ethical reasoning with faith by offering a clear object lesson in doing so. But most outflanked of all are the experts, especially Catholic ones, who have long been attempting an elaborate accommodation with the spirit of the age. Their mode of argumentation, dubbed "proportionalism," is presented and countered in the text, so that, by taking issue with the form in which it has been presented, they can continue the discussion. It is entirely fair to argue that one has been unfairly represented; the crucial point to note, however, is that this encyclical makes the effort to present before it criticizes, and others should return the favor, even though to do so demands close reading.

The outflanking, however, is the more noteworthy event, for the Pope's manner of argument promises to shift the character of the discussion for those more interested in extending it than in defending themselves. And it does so by being—despite its length—an inspiring text. (When that can be said of moral theology we are indeed on the threshold of something new.) What makes it new is the method employed: begin with Scripture, show how rational argument contributes to faith seeking understanding, and return to a church life and practice informed by Scripture. Jesus, not "natural law," is the paradigm throughout, while the argument focuses on human dignity and the way in which the figure of Jesus insures that dignity.

And the proper context for reading this document is not the tired and uninformative intra-Church polarity of "liberal/conservative," but the fresh perspective on politics offered in Vaclav Havel's *Living in Truth*. What impressed one about Havel's analyses when they first appeared was the way in which living in a totalitarian society demanded that he rethink the political, and in the wake of his rethinking readers in the West could begin to see just how tired our debates had become. And irrelevant to boot, as the social fabric crumbled in our national capital, as well as in the urban areas surrounding the very universities in which the discussions were being carried on. Are those debates significantly different from the views on freedom, conscience, and ethics that this encyclical presents in order to criticize? Asking ourselves this question will help us to locate the Pope's constructive efforts, and will also prepare us to understand his appeal to younger people, by catching something of the inspiration of this document ourselves.

Beginning with an extended commentary on the encounter of Jesus with the rich young man and its consequences for Jesus' own disciples (Matthew 19:16-26) allows the Pope to forge an "intrinsic and unbreakable bond between faith and morality." So "the moral life presents itself as the response due to the many gratuitous initiatives taken by God out of love for man," and "the commandments are linked to a promise." Thus keeping them "must not be understood as a minimum limit not to be gone beyond, but rather as a path involving a moral and spiritual journey towards perfection, at the heart of which is love." Yet respecting "all the moral demands of the commandments represents the absolutely essential ground in which the desire for perfection can take root and mature," precisely because this next step "requires mature human freedom."

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John Paul's later claims concerning the universal character of the negative commands of natural law must be understood in this context. Such precepts are not a minimum but are meant to put us on the way to perfection. John Paul knows that any decision to follow Jesus, once made, requires reaffirmation. For Jesus asks us to begin a journey, a following of him, that will make all our actions glorify God. In short, we usually only notice we have become disciples of Christ retrospectively.

Thus freedom grows towards maturity only by being directed to the truth, and that direction comes from the Scriptures as they orient us to the same one to whom the young man was drawn, Jesus. It is this rich affirmation of the "inseparable connection between the Lord's grace and human freedom, between gift and task," which sets up the middle and longest section of the encyclical, offering "discernment and teaching, in order to help [us] in [our] journey towards truth and freedom." Its four sections—freedom and law, conscience and truth, fundamental choice and specific kinds of behavior, and the moral act—keep in the foreground the inherent orientation of human intentionality to what is true and what is good.

Citing Aquinas on the "eternal law," the Pope counters the familiar charge of heteronomy ("who's going to tell *me* what I can or cannot do?") with the reminder that this "law must therefore be considered an expression of divine wisdom: by submitting to the law, freedom submits to the truth of creation." We never find this "eternal law" codified anywhere, of course; "Saint Thomas identifies it with 'the type of the divine wisdom as moving all things to their due end.' " Yet by recalling our status as creatures, we are invited into a domain in which we find our ends or goals given to us, along with the rational means that help us discern them. In Aquinas' words, "this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called natural law." Yet as the very structure of the encyclical displays, these rational means are never sufficient to complete our discernment; one must always return to the figure of Jesus.

While he does not rest any argument on "natural law," the Pope will defend moral arguments that have rested their case on it from the charge of "biologism" by reminding us of the role the body plays in presenting to us "the anticipatory signs, the expression and the promise of the gift of self, in conformity with the wise plan of the Creator." This is contrasted with those who would view us primarily "as rational being[s, who] not only can but actually must freely determine the meaning of [our] behavior." In short, he opposes the "autonomous individual" to an embodied creature whose nature evinces certain "permanent structural elements," variously expressed in diverse cultures yet paradigmatically displayed in "Christ . . . who, having taken on human nature, definitively illumines it in its constitutive elements and in its dynamism of charity towards God and neighbor." These "permanent structural elements" will find moral expression in the negative commandments which, by setting a lower limit to that "dynamism of charity" which has no higher limit, directly challenge those who would violate human dignity in the name of ideologies of any sort.

The primacy of conscience in Catholic moral thought demands that the Pope treat extensively this interior call to faithfulness to what is right. He takes issue with those who "no longer call its actions 'judgments' but 'decisions': who say that only by making these decisions 'autonomously' would [we] be able to attain moral maturity." And he does so by recalling that "the judgment of conscience is a *practical judgment*": it "does not establish the law; rather it bears witness to the authority of natural law and of the practical reason with reference to the supreme good," thereby making manifest "the link between freedom and truth."

With regard to the formation of a sensitive conscience, however, he cites Aquinas: "What is essential is a sort of '*connaturality between man and the true good.*' Such a connaturality is rooted in and develops through the virtuous attitudes of the individual . . . : prudence and the other cardinal virtues, and even before these the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity." So conscience is not some inaccessible and utterly mysterious interiority by which individuals express their autonomy (and isolation), but rather that capacity of discernment that deals, in Aristotle's sense, with "matters that can be other," the capacity that attends anyone who has developed those habits of action that both faith and reason conspire to nurture in the minds and hearts of those who would follow Jesus.

This perspective allows the Pope to question a position that pretends to offer a "deeper" way, in which "the properly moral assessment of the person is reserved to his fundamental option, prescinding in whole or in part from his choice of particular actions, of concrete kinds of behavior." He counters this ideology with a panoply of texts from Scripture showing how the admittedly radical "decision of faith" is "actually exercised in the particular choices of specific actions," thus confirming sound philosophy and the good sense of any partner who rightly objects to professions of love in the face of infidelities. Accordingly, he reminds us that we must be wary of thinking we are different from what we do, since what each of us often insists is not the real "me" turns out to be who, in fact, I am. That such is the case is but a reminder that the Christian moral life cannot be an individual achievement, but requires a community of friends we call the Church to challenge our endemic drift toward self-deception. John Paul in this encyclical is reminding us what friends owe one another, particularly when faced with the ethos of freedom.

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This is the reason for his critique of any moral theory that attempts to detach the moral specificity of human acts from anything other than "the faithfulness of the person to the highest values of charity and prudence," in such a way that moral "precepts should be considered as operative norms which are always relative and open to exceptions." The reasoning here mimics the murkiness of "proportionalism," as this theory has been dubbed by its promoters, and we can leave it to them to challenge the accuracy of the Pope's resume of their thought. What such a focus on "the highest values" can easily overlook, however, is the intrinsic connection of actions with their object—a connection unavoidable if we are to be people of virtue. Thus John Paul II's reminder that it is not enough to do good works if they are not done well, that is, as people whose life is directed to pleasing God. For as Aquinas insisted, even the precepts of the New Law will kill if they are not formed by the work of the Holy Spirit.

For those who may find this way of putting the matter less than helpful, we can find it echoed in Gandhi's reminder that moral matters are fairly defined by the need to regard means as intrinsic to the ends they propose to attain. Keeping the two insulated from each other not only promotes self-deception but in turn fosters institutional arrangements which keep that deception from coming to our attention. So however it may be articulated, "by acknowledging and teaching the existence of intrinsic evil in given human acts, the Church remains faithful to the integral truth about man; she thus respects and promotes man in his dignity and vocation." Such a summary statement recalls us to the context of Vaclav Havel: there are certain actions that no human being is entitled to perpetrate, whatever ideological justifications may be forthcoming. This is not only because of the harm such acts do to others but, equally important, the harm such acts do to the perpetrator.

Such an account of the moral life (1 Corinthians 1:17) recalls that "the relationship of [human] freedom to God's law . . . is ultimately the question of the *relationship between freedom and truth*": the freedom we possess is that of creatures, revealed in Jesus by his life and words as a "freedom acquired in *love*, that is, in the *gift of self*." So we are exhorted to discover the reaches of that freedom in faith rather than by a pretended "autonomy," and reminded—startlingly—that its test is the willingness to die for what is true and right. It is "the personal dignity of every [person that] demands [to be] protected by those moral norms which prohibit without exception actions which are intrinsically evil." And while accommodation is the name of the game we play, it is "martyrdom [which] rejects as false and illusory whatever 'human meaning' one might claim to attribute, even in 'exceptional' conditions, to an act morally evil in itself," and so stands as "the high point of the witness to moral truth."

This clarion call gives existential bite to the assertion that such "norms represent the unshakable foundation and solid guarantee of a just and peaceful human coexistence" and a stark reminder how "they help to preserve the human social fabric and its proper and fruitful development . . . by protecting the inviolable personal dignity of every human being." One thinks of those who gave their lives that political institutions accountable to the people might take root or be restored in one country after another. And a comparably radical note is sounded for us when this encyclical cites an earlier one (*Centesimus Annus*) to remind us: "If there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism."

Our response to this encyclical probably depends in large measure on how we respond to that assertion, which returns us to Vaclav Havel. Those who are satisfied with current political and social arrangements in the West, or who contend that some tinkering will set them right, will be inclined to find the Pope's perspective classical and quaint, perhaps even rigid and unyielding. Those of a more radical bent, on the other hand, may well recognize here a voice clearly and unequivocally on the side of human dignity, and one which offers the figure of Jesus as a compelling ideal and a compassionate guide along the way. Is it any wonder that a generation whose moral guides focused on accommodation find an inspiring leader in this voice? It is this context of "evangelization, aimed at generating and nourishing 'the faith which works through love,' . . . [that sets] the proper place which *continuing theological reflection* about the moral life holds in the Church, the community of believers."

So finally it is not just a question of truth, but a truth that only comes through the works of love. Thus John Paul II calls us to help him recognize "the possible limitations of the human arguments employed by the Magisterium," directing us to dissent as sisters and brothers in Christ. He calls us away from the habits derived from realms that assume politics can be no more than conflicts of interest to the politics of the Church in which Mary-like truth matters. So how the bishops take up their task of vigilance "that the word of God is faithfully taught" and lived in Catholic institutions is crucial, not only for the Church, but also for the world which longs for examples of a truthful politics. We hope that the bishops will discharge their responsibility with a truthful love.

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Robert P. George

Not long ago, I was brought up short by the redoubtable Janet Smith when I complained that students come to college these days already fully indoctrinated into moral relativism. "Ask them," she suggested, "whether in their opinion it is ever right to commit rape, discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, or park in spaces reserved for the handicapped."

Professor Smith has a point: however faithfully they mouth the old relativist pieties, the majority of today's freshmen are, in their politically correct heart of hearts, committed moral absolutists. Like Pope John Paul II, they believe that certain acts are to be condemned always and everywhere as wrong in themselves. They agree with the Pope that rape, for example, cannot be justified by "the circumstances" or by a putatively "greater good" to which the victim's interests in not being raped may legitimately be sacrificed. They part company with him only on the question of which, if any, other acts qualify for such condemnation.

Of course, the "proportionalist" theologians against whose errors the Pope is writing in *Veritatis Splendor* are more sophisticated and imaginative than the freshmen that some of them may teach. It is true, a proportionalist might tell his class in Moral Theology 101, that refraining from committing rape will *usually*, or even "virtually always," in itself and its consequences conduce to the net best proportion of benefit to harm overall and in the long run; but circumstances are imaginable in which the opposite choice would be "the lesser evil" or "for the greater good." Suppose, for example, that you lived in Hitler's Germany and the head of the local Gestapo confronted you with the following options: "Either you rape Sally Ann on your next date (which we will be secretly filming), or I will order my men to kill her and her entire family the following morning." In these (admittedly unlikely) circumstances, the decision to commit date rape would, the proportionalist professor might conclude, be morally good inasmuch as it would be supported by a "proportionate reason." But if this is so, he might go on to say, not even rape truly qualifies as an *intrinsically* evil act. Thus would the proportionalist professor awaken his charges from their dogmatic slumbers.

For more than twenty years theological proportionalists have labored to show that their method of moral analysis—one that purports to resolve moral questions by weighing the "pre-moral" (or "ontic") values at stake in competing possible choices—is workable and sound. At the same time, they have sought to reinterpret biblical teaching and the whole of Christian tradition in ways that would render their method and the conclusions they suppose they can draw from it compatible with the sources upon which Catholics have always relied to guide their judgments of right and wrong.

The Bible says "Do not murder" and "Do not commit adultery." Yet proportionalists are undaunted by these apparently categorical prohibitions. The Decalogue does not, they assure us, exclude *all* direct killing of the innocent or all sexual intercourse between a married person and someone who is not that person's spouse. In forbidding "murder," they say, the Fifth Commandment prohibits *unjust or wrongful* killing—that is to say, killing that is not "the lesser evil" or is not "for a greater good." Similarly, in forbidding "adultery," the Sixth Commandment prohibits *unchaste or wrongful* intercourse; that is to say, intercourse that is not supported by a "proportionate reason."

Purely secular thinkers have joined Christian philosophers in identifying damning philosophical objections to proportionalism's methodology of moral judgment. In *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pope sums these up in pointing out "the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of evaluating all the good and evil consequences and effects—defined as pre-moral—of one's acts." He does not, however, dwell on these methodological inadequacies. Rather, and significantly, he invokes revealed truths of faith in the light of which it is necessary to reject proportionalism and any other theory that undermines or compromises what the Church has always taught: that there are negative precepts which exclude without exception certain types of acts (such as killing the innocent and having intercourse with someone other than one's spouse) the choice and intention of which may be identified and excluded *without* first identifying the circumstances and the further intentions of the agent. Here, as elsewhere in the encyclical, it is clear that the Pope espouses moral absolutes not in the unthinking manner of my freshmen, but after meditated reflection on proportionalism and other more or less sophisticated ways of denying or evading the perennial Christian doctrine on intrinsically evil acts.

"In teaching the existence of intrinsically evil acts, the Church accepts the teaching of Sacred Scripture." For this teaching, the Pope cites two texts: Romans 3:8 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Proportionalists have always had difficulty explaining away these texts. Now the Pope has offered an authoritative interpretation which says, in effect, that these texts mean what they say: Evil may not be done even for the sake of good; those who with full awareness and consent commit grave wrongs—including killing the innocent and engaging in sexual immorality—will have no place in God's Kingdom. Moreover, in discussing "the moral commandments expressed in negative form in the Old and New Testaments," the Pope teaches that "Jesus himself reaffirms that these prohibitions allow no exceptions."

The Pope adduces an additional consideration in

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support of the moral absolutes that exclude certain acts as intrinsically wrong. If there were no moral absolutes, he reasons, many martyrs could legitimately have conformed their behavior to what was demanded by their persecutors and thereby purchased their lives. But in raising such martyrs "to the honor of the altars, the Church has canonized their witness and declared the truth of their judgment, according to which the love of God entails the obligation to respect his commandments, even in the most dire of circumstances."

For centuries, no Jew or Christian imagined that precepts such as "Do not murder" and "Do not commit adultery" meant not to kill or commit adultery unless one had a proportionate reason for doing so. Modern theologians who interpret God's word as permitting such exceptions imply that the moral truths God meant to communicate in the Bible were in fact communicated ineffectively, or were, in any event, radically misunderstood by those to whom they were addressed. If such theologians are correct, then the whole body of believers—Jews and Christians alike—would have been mistaken about crucial matters pertaining to salvation until the final third of the twentieth century. But according to Catholic teaching, which the Pope here recalls and reaffirms (quoting *Lumen Gentium* 12), since Pentecost the Holy Spirit is permanently present in the Church, so that "the universal body of the faithful . . . cannot be mistaken . . . in matters of faith and morals." Thus, it is by appeal not to his own infallibility that the Pope defends the Church's traditional teaching on moral absolutes, but to that of the faithful themselves.

Undoubtedly, many of those who deny or have sought to weaken the Church's affirmation of moral absolutes will reject the Pope's interpretation of Scripture and tradition. In so doing, however, they will make plain their alienation from any truly Catholic conception of divine revelation and its communication. At the same time, they will escalate the conflict over crucial matters of what the Church is to believe, thus deepening the de facto schism that many responsible people believe exists already in the Church and perhaps making formal schism likely.

In holding that the Church's teaching regarding intrinsically evil acts is a matter of revealed truth, the Pope implicitly asserts, as Germain Grisez has pointed out in an article on *Veritatis Splendor* in the *Tablet*, that it is definable. Of course, those who reject the teaching will deny that this is true, just as they deny the authoritativeness of the Pope's interpretations of Scripture. Surely, as Grisez observes, the matter cannot remain unresolved; yet it cannot be settled by disputation among theologians. It will take the definitive judgment of the magisterium to resolve the matter. The ultimate significance of *Veritatis Splendor* may be that it sets the stage for that historic judgment.

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Hadley Arkes

A wise friend, Dermot Quinn, once remarked that a person could believe everything the Church said and still not be a good Catholic. The real question, said Quinn, was whether one believed in the Church as a "truth-telling institution." That question, I must report, took hold of me; and for people who are affected by that question, the Church is likely only to enhance its mystery, and its appeal, when it stands *contra mundum*—against the world. When the Church turns itself against the drift of the modern world, it seems to draw our curiosity ever more compellingly, for it seems then to be even more anchored. It would appear then that its judgments can be explained only by convictions firmly settled. And for some of us, it is a persisting wonder that the Church can keep holding, that it can keep saying no to the moral fashions of the world.

But with the publication of John Paul II's most recent encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, the wonder and the worry may be eased. For it becomes clear, quite early, that something else is at work apart from the steely strength and genius of Karol Wojtyla. Evidently, the suspicion has become deeply rooted in the Church that, when it comes to moral theories, in which the modern world abounds, the modern world seems destined, enduringly, to get the matter wrong. To put it in a familiar idiom, no one will lose money in betting against the latest moral theories of the modern world.

Over the past twenty-five years, as every taxi driver knows, our universities have become seminaries in a new orthodoxy of moral relativism. It was only to be expected that these doctrines, propagated with the prestige of the universities, would diffuse themselves through the community of Christians and Jews. What is unsettling, however, is that the circles of the credulous should now encompass teachers of theology, even teachers professing at Catholic universities. And this is the condition that John Paul II takes as the crisis that invites this new, fuller statement in *Veritatis Splendor*:

> [A] new situation has come about *within the Christian community itself*, which has experienced the spread of numerous doubts and objections of a human and psychological, social and cultural, religious and even properly theological nature, with regard to the Church's moral teachings. It is no longer a matter of limited and occasional dissent, but of an overall and systematic calling into question of traditional moral

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> doctrine, on the basis of certain anthropological and ethical presuppositions. At the root of these presuppositions is the more or less obvious influence of currents of thought which end by detaching human freedom from its essential and constitutive relationship to truth.

Only in our own times do we find professors of law earnestly claiming "rights"—like the "right to an abortion"—while at the same time insisting that there are no moral truths. It never would have occurred to the American Founders to claim rights that were not true or *truly rightful.* As Madison understood, rights and freedoms were claimed only by "moral agents." We do not credit the freedom or "autonomy" of animals, or seek the informed consent of our pets before we authorize surgery on them. For they cannot weigh the reasons or judge the "good" to be attained in surgeries. We respect the freedom, or autonomy, of human beings only because we credit them with the competence of moral agents to reflect about the rightness and wrongness of their choices. But then the paradox: a moral agent, who has access to the understanding of right and wrong, should understand the things he may not claim, even in the name of his own freedom and autonomy. As Aquinas and Lincoln explained at different times, we cannot coherently claim the "right to do a wrong." But now, for the first time, we find a corps of philosophers, theologians, and jurists who detach the notions of "freedom" and "autonomy" from their moral ground—from the only ground, that is, on which they can claim their coherence.

John Paul II seeks to restate, in this encyclical, the connection between freedom and its moral ground. The very existence of freedom, or choice, has the function of directing us outward, to the standards of judgment we use in making those choices. We are led, in other words, to the understanding of the good and just, and ultimately, to the sources of that understanding: in the teaching of Jesus, the Pope finds the "fundamental relationship between freedom and divine law." As the Pope puts it, God has already given an answer to the question of the Good: "He did so by creating man and ordering him with wisdom and love to his final end, through the law which is inscribed in his heart (cf. Romans 2:15)."

And here, many friends of this journal must brace themselves, for we arrive, as the Pope says, at "the 'natural law.' " We arrive at the understanding of right and wrong imprinted in our natures. Man can choose between good and evil, he says, "*thanks to the light of natural reason,* the reflection in man of the splendor of God's countenance." And again: that discernment of good and evil man carries out "by his reason, in particular by his reason enlightened by Divine Revelation and by faith, through the law which God gave to the Chosen People, beginning with the commandments on Sinai."

Those commandments at Sinai become the thread of the teaching running through this text. Seven or eight times the Pope brings back the story, told in Matthew 19, of the young man who asked Christ, "Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." The young man asked, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and mother; also, you shall love your neighbour as yourself."

As John Paul II moves on in his commentary, he meditates on the negative injunctions of the second tablet of the Decalogue, and he takes this editing by Christ as the key to a moral distinction: the "positive moral precepts" leave far more room for prudence, in making an allowance for "exceptions." But the commandments mentioned by Christ from the second tablet were "negative moral precepts," and John Paul II treats those commandments as far more exacting, far less open to shading or compromise in the name of prudence. These negative precepts, he says, "prohibiting certain concrete actions or kinds of behavior as intrinsically evil, do not allow for any legitimate exception." The Pope regards these precepts, then, as the hard, absolute guidelines to the moral life. They repel the claim that the principles of moral judgment are too airy or abstract to offer guidance in any concrete case. They are intelligible, precise—and unyielding.

Indeed, John Paul II restates the case for martyrdom for the sake of reminding the faithful that it would be truly better to die than to make oneself an accomplice, say, in the killing of the innocent, or in other sinful acts. The Pope cites, in this vein, the biblical account of Susanna, who was willing to accept death rather than yield to the sinful passion of two unjust judges (Daniel 13:22-23). "By her readiness to die a martyr," he observes, "she proclaims that it is not right to do what God's law qualifies as evil in order to draw some good from it." For women who are threatened with rape, the Pope would seem to advise them to resist to their death rather than submit.

This is, then, rather stern stuff. Nothing for the faint or wimpish, for the utilitarians or the "proportionalists" in matters of ethics. Nor is this likely to go down all that easily with many conservatives. *Veritatis Splendor* has been heralded by conservative writers as an authoritative answer to the moral relativists. And yet, conservatives have not been especially keen in recent years about natural law or natural rights. Those notions have elicited the most pronounced skepticism among conservative jurists and commentators on the law. It has been a reflex, even among friends of this journal, to be mirthful about the pre-

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tensions of natural law, and to be deeply suspicious of anyone who thinks he can find, in natural law, the ground of decision in any concrete case. But in that event we ought to be clear: no one can praise this robust dubiety among the conservative jurists and at the same time celebrate the teaching of *Veritatis Splendor*. Even some of our best friends are legal positivists, but if John Paul II is compellingly right, then Chief Justice Rehnquist cannot be.

But the jurists are not the only conservatives who are likely to experience some unease with this new encyclical. Many students of Leo Strauss, and a flock of Aristotelians, may suffer tremors over the references in this new text to truths that are "categorical—unyielding and uncompromising." On certain matters, with certain acts, there will be not the slightest concession to prudence. It is one thing to speak gamely of "absolute" moral truths, but even the people who speak in these accents may feel a chill of sobriety when they suddenly encounter a man in authority who actually takes these moral commands with literal seriousness.

Still, that sobering pause will be the prelude to some earnest questioning. With a notable unease, Michael Walzer once pronounced his willingness to order, for Nazi Germany, the kind of massive bombing he had condemned as immoral in Vietnam. To resist, as he said, an "immeasurable evil," he was willing to accept, in this instance, a brand of killing that could not make fine discriminations between combatants and noncombatants. Writers who have embraced the kind of natural law expounded by the Pope have condemned the strategies of nuclear deterrence precisely because they ultimately depend on the serious willingness to order a bout of killing that must cover, in its sweep, the innocent. Would their position have aligned them, then, against Churchill? Churchill had been determined to use every available weapon, and without getting too explicit about it, he was evidently willing also to suspend most of the moral rules in resisting the Nazis.

Even among the supporters of the Pope, this cannot be such a closed or settled question. But of course we know that the teaching of the Pope lends itself to layers of shading and calibration. The injunction to avoid killing is an injunction to avoid the killing of the innocent, or unjustified killing. The commandment "Thou shall not bear false witness" was not violated when Dutch householders refused to reveal to the Gestapo at the door the Jews they were hiding. The Pope insists that certain acts are intrinsically evil, and that the second tablet of the Decalogue offers a precise guidance in identifying those acts. And yet, the Pope's most attentive readers also understand that "acts" are not defined solely by the moving of bodies. They depend also on the will that forms the act, or the maxim that guides the understanding of the actor. The Dutch householders were not seeking to injure the Nazis when they spoke falsely. Nor were they endorsing deceit as a general rule of life. They were willing, rather, the protection of the innocent, and they were thoroughly justified in misleading the wicked.

None of this is spelled out in the encyclical, but we can assume that it is folded into the teaching because we understand by now the tradition of moral reasoning that stands behind this writing. But that is to say that the encyclical does not entirely explain itself. The force of its arguments and the deeper resonances of its teachings will be grasped mainly by the people who are already tutored in this school of moral reasoning. And that explains the reception accorded to this encyclical. The papal statement has produced its most electric and buoying effect among the writers who are already adept in natural law, and attuned, with the most exquisite precision, to the moral perspectives of John Paul II. But this same quality in the encyclical also marks, regrettably, the limits to its reach.

For example, certain writers and public figures have incorporated deeply some of the fallacies of moral reasoning that the Pope subjects to the most incisive critique. Yet they will be too dim to find in these pages an account that makes it clear to them—in a sudden, luminous, arresting way—that they are indeed seeing a portrait of themselves. And so Ms. Janet Reno has readily retailed the cliché, well-travelled in our public discourse, that we must attack the "root causes" of crime, in poverty, class, race. But I rather doubt she will recognize that the Pope is writing about her, or about people of her cast of mind, when he writes that

> a number of disciplines, grouped under the name of the "behavioral sciences," have rightly drawn attention to the many kinds of psychological and social conditioning which influence the exercise of human freedom. . . . But some people, going beyond the conclusions which can be legitimately drawn from these observations, have come to question or *even deny* the very reality of human freedom. [Emphasis added.]

But Janet Reno, the army of social scientists, and the decent citizens in thrall to social science are not likely to grasp that the encyclical offers a commentary on the likes of them. And still less likely are they to grasp, from these terse passages, exactly what that commentary is.

On the other hand, certain writers on moral theology will have not the slightest doubt that this encyclical is directed at them. There is a thread of complaint running throughout the encyclical about "some trends of theological thinking and certain philosophic affirmations" as "incompatible with revealed truth." These trends are soon named: they are trends toward "proportionalism" or "consequentialism" in

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ethics. "These theories," says the Pope, "cannot claim to be grounded in the Catholic moral tradition." For those theories, as he notes, "deny the existence of negative moral norms regarding specific kinds of behavior, norms which are valid without exception."

No intimations here, no slip into innuendo. And as far as I am concerned, it is all aptly aimed. I have crossed swords on many occasions with the "proportionalists," but they are even more vexing to the Church than they are to me, because their teaching introduces the gravest doubts among Catholics themselves about the teaching of their own Church. They amply deserve the resistance that the Pope offers here.

And yet, the full seriousness of the encounter actually moved me to a certain sympathy for some of these writers. Their theories are named, though they are not. Still, it is evident, even to people with a remote interest in the field, just who are the persons—the particular men and women—the Pope has in mind. He has decorously held back from singling them out by name, and yet they are there, marked out for opposition. As they themselves must recognize, this kind of exposure "comes with the territory." They have been unsparing in their criticism of the hierarchy, and they cannot be surprised to receive a hefty dose of criticism in return. But what they can decently expect, I think, is a filling out of the argument. If the Holy Father concentrates on them the heavy weapons of reproach, they might expect him to supply, at the same time, a new exertion of argument, a new effort to explain to them, with that acuteness he can summon, just where they have gotten it wrong.

Yet the "proportionalists" are not likely to find here any new arguments that might encourage them to think anew about their position. But they will find in these pages the ring of authority. They will find old understandings restated with a new insistence, and that insistence may bear lessons yet. For one thing, it offers a jolt of sobriety, which may suddenly concentrate—and clear—the mind. To rework an old line of Blackstone's, the Pope has animadverted on these writers with a becoming severity. Indeed, what John Paul II seems to be saying now to these academics is this: However much you may feel sustained by the fashions in the academy, you should not delude yourselves for a moment that your kind of teaching is compatible with Catholicism. Whatever it is you are doing, it is emphatically not Catholic moral theology, and as estimable as you may be, you are not Catholic theologians.

Of course, the people suffering these distractions are not apt to understand these corrections, papally tendered. And so John Paul II makes it clear that this encyclical is also addressed to the bishops, who stand after all in a line of responsibility within the Church and its institutions. Willy-nilly, they preside over the dioceses that contain the universities and institutes and hospitals which in turn may house the people who profess theology and the vagrant forms of "bioethics." In these days, no mere presidents of Catholic universities would dare to pronounce in public on whether the professors offering instruction under their banner are teaching things that are notably short of sensible, or even affably heretical. In these pusillanimous times, heretics are burned mainly on the beaches, and they may need to suffer no more than the penance of living on their royalties.

This encyclical furnishes a ground to the bishops to raise some stern questions to the presidents of colleges about the misteaching that is taking place with their acquiescence and complicity. Alarms need not be sounded—we are not likely to see professors or presidents summoned to Rome, along with dramatic demands that writers recant. But at times, with papal ambassadors schooled in Rome in forms of politics that are quite delicate, we may see an artful hand at work behind the scenes. We might then find a maneuver quite as deft as the exchanges that finally induced the administration of Georgetown to withdraw its recognition of the "pro-choice" group at the university. If the same arts are in place, the encyclical offers a new lever, which subtly strengthens the hands of the bishops and papal delegates. Again, no one expects that this lever will be actively used. But in case any bishops are mulling over the possibilities, and reckoning the first, salutary use of this new mandate, I tender herewith some modest suggestions.

One of the chief devices for misinstructing Catholics on the teachings of their own Church has come through the public celebration of politicians who are "pro-choice." The point has been made even more precisely and dramatically in the celebration of Bill Clinton: Catholic politicians like Raymond Flynn of Boston and Harris Wofford of Pennsylvania stood on the platform at Notre Dame along with the president of the university during an appearance by Clinton in the presidential campaign. The assembly of these Catholic politicians at this place made the message unmistakable: there is evidently no issue of moral consequence that should inhibit any Catholic in offering the most enthusiastic support for Bill Clinton.

And of course, since the election, no public gesture of this kind has been more unreserved or heedless than the celebration offered by Georgetown University. Clinton is the first graduate of Georgetown to become President of the United States, and he is the first President to regard abortion not as a regrettable private choice, but as nothing less than a "public good" that deserves to be promoted and supported with public funds. From its first days in office, the Clinton Administration has sought to remove from the laws every lingering inhibition on the practice of abortion. And in the face of this manifest tendency, the praise of Georgetown for its alumnus has become ever more orgiastic and fawning.

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But what might a bishop do? With the presence of the new encyclical, he can ask the president of a Catholic university whether he is aware of this recent statement by John Paul II. He can inquire whether the president is aware that there is a serious tension running very deep between the position of Bill Clinton on abortion and the teachings of the Church. If the president is so aware, then he must surely understand the need to be uncommonly careful in not misleading people who are faithful but uninformed. This is a day in which warning labels are placed on almost everything, and so it may not be taken as a device utterly novel or unfamiliar if the president of the university were "advised" to append this "warning" with any appearance by Mr. Clinton: A senior member of the faculty, or the president himself, may be asked to inform the audience that Clinton shall be received with all the respect due to a President of the United States. But the courtesies due a President should not move the university to misrepresent the teachings of Catholicism to its own students. And what is critical for students to understand (he may continue) is that no one who forms his will in congruence with the position of Mr. Clinton on abortion can possibly claim at the same time to be a "good Catholic," in accord with the teachings of his Church. That much, we may properly say, deserves to be made plain, even though many people on the campus may share many parts of Mr. Clinton's agenda.

That simple statement, attached to every one of Mr. Clinton's appearances, may induce him to stop appearing at Catholic universities. Or it may induce Catholic universities to stop their complicity in the promotion of abortion through their willingness to romance Catholic politicians who find it in their interest, politically, to be "pro-choice." If a Catholic university cannot produce a senior member or a president willing to speak these lines, then that may itself be a measure of the erosion that has taken place in schools that have merely persisted in the habit of calling themselves Catholic. And as John Paul II has remarked quite pointedly in *Veritatis Splendor*, "It falls to [bishops], in communion with the Holy See, both to grant the title 'Catholic' to Church-related schools, universities, health care facilities, and counseling services, and, in cases of a serious failure to live up to that title, to take it away."

Who would doubt that a policy of this kind, in drawing lines more firmly, would convey bracing news to large numbers of Catholics? And who would doubt that the gesture may generate political effects even beyond the circle of Catholics? The Church will of course be accused in familiar quarters of interfering in politics. But Catholic politicians and theologians of the left have been using politics for many years to intervene in the Church and misinstruct Catholics about their own teachings. This encyclical, sustained by the bishops, may mark a new resolve on the part of the Church not to suffer these intimidations. And the proposition thrown back at the critics would be this: the conditions of a republic cannot command the Church to silence in the face of a serious tendency, in its own ranks, to deny its own moral teaching. And when it comes to the politics of addressing Catholic universities, professors, and politicians, the claims of prudence cannot override the claims of truth. Nor can it be required, by the decorous politics of a republic, that the Church should not be overly strenuous in respecting itself, or holding, with an unseemly attachment, to the truth of its own teachings.

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Population Policy: Ideology as Science

Nicholas Eberstadt

I

In recent years the poorer regions of the earth have been swept by a "population revolution" which, though it has attracted comparatively little attention, is nevertheless both unprecedented and pregnant with consequences for the peoples of the countries affected. This "revolution" has been taking place neither in the bedroom nor in the health clinic, but rather in the corridors of government. Among otherwise diverse countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, a single idea has rapidly gained currency: that a modern government should have a population "policy"—an array of laws and measures specifically aimed at shaping the composition, size, and rates of change of the national population.

India's was the first Third World government to endorse the principle of an active population policy. It took that step in December 1952, with the adoption of its first Five Year Plan, a document establishing as a long-run governmental objective the direction of the country's population toward "a level consistent with the requirements of the national economy." By the mid-1980s, over thirty governments in the less-developed regions of the world were following suit. This group included the governments of six of the world's ten most populous countries. By the late 1980s, more than seventy of the world's governments reported that they viewed their national fertility or population growth rates as "unsatisfactory," and that they considered policy interventions to alter these rates to be "appropriate." As of 1990, more than three billion people were living under such governments: over four-fifths of the population of the less-developed regions of the earth at the time, and nearly two-thirds of the population of the entire globe.

The adoption of comprehensive population policy marks an eventful change in the conception of the role of government in civic life. In the past, governments were often called upon to perform duties with demonstrable demographic consequences—the regulation of immigration, for example, or the eradication of communicable disease. The demographic impact of such programs, however, was typically subsidiary to their intended purpose (the preservation of national sovereignty, the promotion of public health, etc.). The idea of harnessing state power to the goal of altering the demographic rhythms of society per se suggests—and indeed almost seems to require—a new sort of relationship between the state and the citizen.

The nature of this new relationship is indicated by some of the targets that have been set by contemporary population policies. The government of Bangladesh, for example, has committed itself to the goal of a total fertility rate of 2.34 births per family by the year 2000; women in Bangladesh today, however, are thought to have an average of just under five children. The government of Ghana, for its part, has determined that its national fertility rate at the start of the twenty-first century should be 3.3 births per family; yet Ghana's parents are currently guessed to be having an average of about six children per family. If Bangladesh and Ghana are to meet their established targets, both governments must apparently oversee a reduction in their people's fertility by roughly 50 percent in the next six years—and in Ghana there are as yet no indications of sustained fertility decline. Just how such a radical alteration of personal behavior in so intimate a sphere of life is to be achieved is not clear to outside observers; it may not even be apparent to the planners who envision these targets. But if such reshaping of national fertility patterns is to be set in motion by government action, there would obviously

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have to be direct, far-reaching, and even forcible state interventions into the daily lives of the overwhelming majority of the citizens of these two countries—as well as others with similar "targets."

What accounts for the rise of population policy? "Population planning" as currently practiced in China—with its "birth quotas" and its manifold pressures and penalties to "convince" parents to have but a single child—may seem particularly consonant with the philosophical underpinnings of a Communist dictatorship. Yet a stringent and encompassing population policy, only somewhat less ambitious than Beijing's, has also been executed in Singapore—a society with a nominally democratic government. Indeed, the list of Third World governments committed to the goal of shaping the demographic pattern of their societies seems to cover the political spectrum, including not only dictatorships and one-party states (Haiti, Indonesia), but also monarchies (Morocco, Nepal) and a number of genuine constitutional democracies (such as Barbados and Botswana).

The revolution in government presaged by an activist population policy would thus seem to be based less in politics per se than in "science," for in the final analysis it is the field of learning known as "population studies" that provides population policy with its raison d'être. This field, it is widely believed, has advanced sufficiently to permit meaningful predictions of the impact of population changes on the social and economic development of both rich and poor societies. Insofar as modern governance is predicated on the idea that national directorates can and should act to improve the material well-being of their subjects, and insofar as a useful understanding of the specific economic and social consequences of population change appears to have been developed, it should not be surprising that a growing number of governments have seen merit in the prospect of shaping the demographic contours of their country so that national welfare and social prosperity might be "scientifically" advanced.

Unfortunately for all involved, contemporary population policies have in large part been promoted and adopted on the basis of a serious misconception. The relationship between population change and economic development is as yet rather poorly understood, the assertions of certain bold professionals to the contrary notwithstanding. For many of the relationships between the two that have been suggested are at best highly tentative, and in any event cannot be construed to imply causation. Still others are characterized by false precision or misplaced specificity. And despite the authority that population "scientists" today lend to the worldwide effort to promote birth control, convincing evidence that *voluntary* family planning programs have resulted in sustained changes in fertility norms is still lacking. None of this augurs well for the populations upon which far-reaching and purportedly scientific population policies are to be applied.

II

The relationship between population change and social or economic change is a topic awesome in its complexity. Many of the issues raised by the "population question," moreover, involve matters of the deepest personal conviction or preference. Any discourse on population quickly comes to touch, if only implicitly, on such questions as the nature of free will; the equality of man; the rights of the living and the unborn; the obligation of the individual to his group, his society, or his God; the sanctity of the family; society's duties to the poor; the destiny of one's nation or one's race; the prospects for mankind; and the value of life. Such questions are best, or at least most comfortably, addressed in consultation with one's conscience, creed, or ideology. Thus, in any analysis of so-called population problems, the element of faith, whether directly expressed or inadvertently demonstrated, is unavoidable. Although ostensibly secular in nature, population studies often exhibit many of the trappings most commonly associated with religious movements.

In recent decades much of the most influential thinking on the "population question" has acquired a certain messianic tone. It has not been uncommon for respected authorities to evoke the image of an apocalypse brought on by adverse population trends—and to justify programs requiring great sacrifice or exertion by the salvation from hideous alteratives that they alone would offer. In 1992, for example, the UN Population Fund announced that "a sustained and concerted program starting immediately" to curb worldwide population growth was essential, since current trends, in the words of Nafis Sadik, UNFPD's director general, create a "crisis [that] heightens the risk of future economic and ecological catastrophes."

Such warnings have been issued before. Stanford University's Paul Ehrlich began his 1968 best-seller, *The Population Bomb*, with a prophecy: "The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s the world will undergo famines—hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now." The most optimistic of Professor Ehrlich's "scenarios," involving a radical worldwide program of population control and resource conservation to reduce the world's total population to 1.5 billion (less than a third of its present level) in some future century, envisioned the death by starvation of about a fifth of the people alive in the world in 1968. By the same token, *The Limits to Growth*, the 1972 million-selling computer modelling study sponsored by the Club of Rome, produced simulation of future trends that suggested an impending "collapse" of global population—proportionately and absolutely more devastating than was the Black Death in medieval Europe—in the absence of a balancing of world birth and death rates by 1975, cutbacks in pollu-

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tion, and substantial increases in industrial and agricultural efficiency.

Belief in such visions was not always diminished when predictions predicated upon them were decisively disproven by events. Instead, the demographic "true believers," in the fashion of millenarians, often simply reformulated their prophesies so that they could not be empirically disproven.

Rapid population growth is not the only demographic phenomenon that has prompted observers to invoke specters of catastrophe. Dire consequences have with equal assurance been ascribed to population slowdown or decline. During the 1930s, noted economists such as John Maynard Keynes and Gunnar Myrdal warned that the failure of Western populations to reproduce themselves would contribute to unemployment, insufficiency of investment, agricultural crisis, and low living standards—precisely the problems that a more recent generation of population experts has described as consequences of rapid population growth!

The tendency to invest in population theories with an almost religious zeal—as well as to harness them to the service of political movements buoyed by public hysteria—might be considerably reduced if there actually were a body of knowledge demonstrably capable of explaining population change, or of connecting this change predictively with various determinants or consequences. Unfortunately, such an understanding of the process of population change does not exist. Although the postwar field of "population studies" has occasioned wide-ranging, detailed, and often ingenious academic investigations of the interplay between population, economy, and society, nothing like a generalized understanding of the socioeconomic causes or effects of population change can be found today—or even looks to be in the offing.

One is, of course, asking too much of demographers to expect them to provide any overarching "laws of population." No one would demand of an historian that he provide a unified "theory of history." For all the mathematical rigor required in some of its investigations, the study of human population is a field of social inquiry, not a natural science. Such relationships as it may uncover at given times in diverse places are, like all social phenomena, shaped by the factors of human values and volition, quantities that may seldom be reduced to fixed parameters.

It is instructive to consider some of the limits of today's "population science." Despite the sophistication of population mathematics, the rate of growth of human populations cannot be predicted with accuracy over any extended period of time. Population projections from the fairly recent past highlight the problem. In the 1920s Raymond Pearl, then one of America's leading population biologists, predicted that the United States would reach a population of 200 million around the start of the twenty-second century; in actuality, America passed the 200 million mark in the 1960s. In the 1930s, France's foremost demographers agreed that French population was certain to fall; various projections indicated a drop of between two and twelve million people—that is, from 5 to 30 percent—between 1930 and 1980. In actuality, despite the losses it sustained in the Second World War, France's population rose by about 30 percent over that period. More recent refinements of techniques have added little to the precision of demographic forecasts. In 1959, for example, the United Nations' medium variant projection put India's 1981 population at 603 million—an estimate which, twenty-two years later, turned out to be off by about 100 million people. Long-term population projects are not always wrong, of course, but they can be right only by chance, for there is no scientific method for predicting either death rates or birthrates.

There is reason, moreover, to expect population projections to become even less accurate in the future. Advances in the fields of public health and public administration now make it possible for governments in low-income countries to reduce national mortality at an increasingly rapid pace—if these governments are resolved to pursue the necessary policies for doing so—even in the absence of more general social improvement. At the same time, the speed with which fertility change may occur has been increasing. In England and Wales, it took almost eighty years in the nineteenth and early twentieth century for the birth rate to fall by 15 points. In the People's Republic of China in the 1970s, a reduction in the national birthrate of about 20 points was accomplished—by whatever means—in a single decade. Even without aggressively anti-natalist measures, a drop in birth rates of over 15 points occurred in postwar Japan in barely ten years (1948-1958). With a growing possibility of the rapid alteration of demographic trends, the horizon of accuracy on population projections, far from extending, may be drawing ever closer to the present.

One of the reasons that long and even medium-range population projections are of such limited accuracy is that there exists no method for predicting fertility change in contemporary societies. There is, in fact, no method for predicting even the *onset* of fertility decline in those societies where birth rates are high, and seemingly stable. The search for social or economic determinants or preconditions for changes in fertility has in large measure proved frustrating, for societies of the modern world and the recorded past exhibit a breathtaking diversity of relationships between demographic, economic, and social conditions.

Low fertility, for example, is commonly thought to be associated with high levels of health; yet life expectancy in contemporary Kenya, where the total number of births per woman is currently believed to hover around 6.5, appears to be similar to that of Ger-

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many in the mid-1920s, where the total fertility rate was only 2.3. Fertility decline in nineteenth-century France proceeded even when levels of national mortality were considerably higher than those prevailing in Bangladesh today; by contrast, there is as yet no indication of secular fertility decline in Oman, even though its birthrate is thought to be 30 percent higher, and its life expectancy nearly thirty years greater, than that of France in 1830. It is commonly said that fertility and income are negatively correlated, but the limits of such generalizations are suggested by the World Bank's latest *World Development Report*, in which Tajikistan's level of per capita output and its birthrate are *both* depicted as being about twice as high as the corresponding figures for Sri Lanka. The great diversity of relationships that may be seen between demographic and social or economic conditions makes virtually any simple generalization about populations and development hazardous, for there is almost always at least one example that can be found to call the generalized relationship into question.

If there are broad difficulties with theories of population, there are also a number of serious problems in the study of population and development that are entirely practical. Foremost among these is the problem of false precision. In the statistical accounts used most frequently for the analysis of world demographic and economic conditions, numbers and trends are often presented with a degree of implied specificity that is entirely unwarranted by the actual margins of error surrounding them. Not surprisingly, this has often led scholars to erroneous or untenable conclusions.

The nature of the problem is suggested by the 1985 edition of the World Bank's *World Development Report*, the most widely circulated annual publication on development issues. In its statistical appendix, it presents an estimate for the population of Somalia as 5.1 million—implying a margin of error of 100,000, or about 2 percent. The same appendix gives Somalia a birthrate of fifty per thousand for both 1965 and 1983—again implying a 2 percent margin of error. It might therefore come as a surprise to learn that Somalia has no system whatsoever for registering births, and as of 1985 had *never* conducted a national census. Those figures for Somalia were essentially invented: guesses dignified with decimal points.

Somalia, to be sure, is an extreme example. Still, it would be unwise to assume the accuracy of most current demographic estimates. Near-complete vital registration systems cover only about a tenth of the population of the Third World—and in general tend to be least comprehensive in precisely those nations where the connection between population and development is of the greatest humanitarian concern. Indicative of the uncertainties attendant on measuring world population is the lag time between the estimated peaking of world population growth and the announcement of that event by demographers. It is now widely believed that the world rate of natural increase reached its maximum between 1960 and 1965, and has declined since then. Demographers, however, did not begin to suggest with any confidence that the world rate of population growth might have peaked until 1977—more than ten years after the presumed date of that event.

If demographic trends are beset with uncertainties, estimating economic output must be an even more tentative undertaking, involving as it does not only the measurement of populations, but also of their per capita production and consumption of goods and services—not to mention the valuation of these latter. For less-developed countries the problems of estimating levels of economic output and their rates of change can be arresting. To cite but one of many possible examples, a team lead by Irving Kravis of the University of Pennsylvania concluded that India's nominal gross domestic product per capita for 1970 would have been tripled if it had been measured not in terms of dollars at the prevailing rupee-dollar exchange rate, but rather in terms of the standard international costs of the goods and services that the "average" Indian produced. Kravis' estimates of purchasing power, however, did not apply to all poor countries equally. Measured by the regular exchange-rate method, 1970 per capita GDP in Kenya appeared to be 44 percent higher than in India, but after adjusting for differences in actual purchasing power, the Kravis team concluded that the Kenyan per capita GDP was almost 9 percent *lower* than India's. The effect of such adjustments on any presumed correlation between demographic and economic levels in the two countries, clearly, would be profound.

Population change itself further compounds the difficulty of measuring a society's economic welfare. Because children tend to consume less—often substantially less—than adults, standards of living at any given level of national income can be significantly affected by the age composition of a population. A rapidly growing population in which average age is comparatively low will appear to have a lower per capita level of consumption than a stationary population with a higher average age, even if at every single age people in both populations consume exactly the same amount. And changes in mortality can introduce even greater biases.

Innovations in public health during the course of this century have typically had a disproportionate impact on the mortality of children and on diseases associated with poverty. If poorer parents tend to have more children than richer parents, as is the case in many (but not all) low-income societies today, improvements in health could appear to be lowering per capita income and contributing to greater income inequalities in society as a whole, even though the fami-

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lies affected by these life-saving changes could regard themselves as indisputably better off.

Dan Usher, an economist at Queen's University in Canada, has attempted to impute an economic value to improvements in life expectancy in several developed and less-developed countries. Though his results are sensitive to his assumptions about interest rates and the self-perceived value of additional consumption, they are nonetheless interesting. By Usher's computations, adjustments to account for the value of lengthened lifespans to those whose lives were extended would have raised the nominal annual economic growth rate for Chile for the years 1931-1971 by over half, and would have more than doubled Sri Lanka's for 1946-1968. These may be extreme cases: health improvements in both societies were rapid during those years, and measured rates of economic growth were comparatively slow. Nevertheless, Usher's computations may suggest the sorts of factors that are ignored in conventional discussions of the impact of population growth on society and economy—and of the effect that ignoring such factors may have on the evaluation of the consequences of population change.

III

In the less-developed countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, governmental concern with population trends today focuses chiefly on the issue of rapid population growth. The problem is that "overpopulation," a term so familiar and used so frequently as to suggest that it has a fixed and understood meaning, cannot in fact be defined unambiguously. Which is to say, there is no workable demographic definition of the idea of overpopulation.

Consider some of the possible demographic criteria by which to judge that a society is "overpopulated." Is it that the rate of natural increase—the birthrate minus the death rate—is "unusually" high? If so, the United States in the first decade of its independence was almost certainly overpopulated: between 1790 and 1800 its rate of natural increase was 3 percent per year—a rate significantly higher than that ascribed to Bangladesh today, and roughly half again as high as the rates currently estimated for Haiti or India. What about birthrate itself? Again: the U.S. birthrate in the 1790s was about 55 per thousand—a rate higher than any of the 127 national birthrate "estimates" the World Bank gives in its *World Development Report 1993*, and at least 25 points higher than the latest World Bank estimates for India, Indonesia, or the Philippines. Perhaps, then, overpopulation should be judged by a country's population density, i.e., its ratio of people to land area. In that case, taking United Nations' figures for 1991, France would have been more overpopulated than the Indonesian archipelago, Japan would have been far more overpopulated than India, and Singapore (where government policy is now striving to *raise* the birthrate) would have been vastly more overpopulated than Bangladesh. But by far the most overpopulated state on earth would have been the Kingdom of Monaco! On the other hand, if the criterion were what is called the "dependence ratio"—the proportion of children under fifteen and adults over sixty-five in relation to the population of "working age" (conventionally designated as fifteen to sixty-five)—then, according to UN figures, as of 1960 Ireland and Nepal were approximately equally overpopulated, in 1980 Israel was more overpopulated than Sri Lanka, and the least overpopulated societies in the world as of 1990 were Singapore and Hong Kong! If emigration were to be taken as the measure of overpopulation, then Mozambique, Angola, and the other "front-line" states adjacent to the Republic of South Africa would be overpopulated, while South Africa, which is said to employ more than one million migrants from neighboring nations, would presumably be underpopulated. By the same token, the former East Germany, whose loss of citizens to West Germany proceeded with alacrity until the construction of the Berlin Wall, would have been an overpopulated country, its government's constant complaints about labor shortages notwithstanding. Finally, if overpopulation is indicated by unemployment (not strictly speaking a demographic measure, but one that is sometimes used as such), it would seem that the United States experienced serious overpopulation during the Depression (when fertility fell below replacement levels), and was least overpopulated in the mid-1960s (the years directly following the postwar baby boom).

"Overpopulation" does indeed point to a problem, but it is a problem mislabelled and misidentified. In a more careful discussion, the phenomena most frequently cited as proof of overpopulation would be deemed characteristics of *poverty*. Inadequate incomes, poor health, malnutrition, overcrowding, unemployment—it is images such as these that are conjured up by the notion of "overpopulation," but they are unambiguously images of poverty and material deprivation.

Poverty and material deprivation, in all their various manifestations, cause great suffering, and in some cases government can do much to alleviate them—and even more, to provide an atmosphere conducive to broad social and material advance. But to mistake the great range of social and economic problems experienced by human populations for problems driven or created by demographic forces is a profound error. Rapid population growth is a pervasive fact of life in less-developed countries today—a form of social change so typical, and at the same time so profound, that it may spuriously be associated with almost any other social phenomenon of the present generation. Many of the problems typically ascribed to "population pressures," however, turn out on closer examination to be caused by factors quite independent of demographic trends. And in the case of other such problems, the impact of demographic change is, at best,

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secondary. Attempting to redress such problems all too often simply compounds the difficulties of certain groups, and even of entire populations, in their efforts to maintain or improve their standards of living in the face of a hostile political or economic environment.

IV

Yet, as noted, activist population programs have been embraced by governments presiding over something like four-fifths of the people of the Third World. Western governments and Western-funded multilateral organizations are currently spending over $1 billion a year on population programs in Third World countries. In some of these countries, such as Bangladesh, the budget for family planning by the 1980s was larger than the budget for all other health-related services combined. Thus it seems appropriate to ask, what do family planning programs, and national population policies, actually do? What is their demographic impact, and how do they affect living standards and future development prospects?

Voluntary family planning programs typically subsidize, advertize, or otherwise promote the use of modern contraceptive technologies by sexually active couples (usually but not always partners in marriage). Modern contraceptives are not necessarily more effective than traditional means of birth control; on grounds of effectiveness alone, nothing can improve upon total abstinence or infanticide. Modern contraception is, however, a much more pleasant alternative, and, used properly, can be more effective than the traditional methods of birth control (such as coitus interruptus, the rhythm method, or the local contraceptive potion). A cheap and readily available supply of simple modern contraceptives can allow parents who wish to make use of them to improve their own level of comfort, and may also (by facilitating the spacing of births) improve family health chances—even if their adoption has no ultimate effect on the size of the family. Such services would be seen as raising living standards today (albeit in ways whose benefits are not easily computed), and might even improve prospects for material progress by augmenting society's stock of "human capital."

Government-sponsored voluntary family planning programs could under these circumstances best be justified as a public health service—one of the many activities a government may promote to reduce mortality, augment human capital, and improve the well-being of individuals and families. Unfortunately, many contemporary advocates of family planning programs for the Third World—be they decision-makers in local capitals or enthusiasts from Western countries—have been looking for much more than this. Typically, they see voluntary family planning as a technique for accelerating enforced reductions in fertility for societies where family size is large.

Their hopes are misplaced. As long as family planning is voluntary, it will remain a tool with which parents can attain the family size, or spacing, they desire. No research has so far suggested that the advent of modern contraceptives *intrinsically* alters parents' view of children, or ideals about the family. For this reason, similar patterns of contraceptive use may be associated with very different levels of parental fertility.

By World Bank estimates, 56 percent of the married women of reproductive age in Japan in 1989 used modern methods of contraception (pill, IUD, diaphragm, sterilization, etc.). Japan's total fertility rate for 1991 is put at 1.5 births per woman. In Turkey, where the rate of use is put at 63 percent, the total fertility rate is said to be 3.4 births per woman—over twice the level in Japan. That gap speaks not to the ineffectiveness of Turkish contraceptives, but to the decisive importance of the attitudes and intentions of the people who use them.

New inexpensive contraceptive technologies will, in many places, result in a decline in "unwanted" fertility by making birth control less prohibitively difficult. But it is unclear how large such a decline would be, and there is no reason to expect that it must always be substantial. The impact of reducing unwanted pregnancies, moreover, would not be as great on population increase as on fertility, since the mortality rate for "unwanted" births would be higher than average. And unless the very availability of modern contraceptives by itself stimulates a revolution in attitudes toward family size—as over a quarter of a century of family planning efforts have failed to do in Nepal, and three decades of programs have not done in rural Pakistan—the demographic impact of family planning would be a discrete and self-extinguishing adjustment, as the previously "unmet demand" of motivated users is progressively satisfied.

In many parts of the globe, an effective family planning program might actually *increase* the birthrate and the rate of population growth. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, for example, there is little demonstrated interest in modern contraception, but considerable concern about *infertility*. In those societies, the fate of a barren woman is unenviable. Helping parents attain their desired numbers of children might in such circumstances result in heightened fertility. The example of postwar Kenya, where the total fertility rate apparently rose from about six to nearly eight during a generation of substantial improvements in health, and despite nearly twenty years of family planning efforts, should make it clear that increasing parents' freedom to choose will serve the purposes of *parents*, whether or not these are in accordance with the preference or ideology of the government and its advisers.

The underlying thrust of most family planning efforts in less-developed countries over the past

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generation has been unmistakably anti-natalist. The anti-natalist sentiment behind support for family planning initiatives is explicitly expressed by the principal international institutions funding these initiatives, including the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development. This sentiment has affected not only the allocation of public funds, but also the evaluations of performance.

In a number of less-developed countries, the commitment of public funds to family planning efforts is striking. In 1980, the World Bank estimates, government expenditure per current contraceptive user was $68 in Ghana and $69 in Nepal. These figures compare with World Bank numbers suggesting that the total governmental expenditure on *all* health programs worked out to be about $20 per family in Ghana, and $8 in Nepal, in the same year. In such societies, where general levels of mortality are high and health problems are pressing, it would appear that family planning programs are not subject to the same strict criteria in competing for scarce funds that other health programs must meet. The exemption of family planning from the ordinary constraints of budgetary finance may be due to belief that family planning provides additional "services"—such as lowering the birthrate.

The unscientific faith that proponents of family planning have placed in the ability of their programs to "work" is suggested by the lack of careful investigation into the actual effects of family planning projects in trial areas. Although billions of dollars are being expended annually on family planning services in less-developed countries, and such programs have been promoted by various governments at the national level for four decades, there are only a few studies that have attempted to measure the demographic and health impact of family planning against a "control group"—a similar area which lacks the service. This lacuna is all the more striking in that "control studies" are standard practice in the health sciences.

Some proponents of family planning programs have argued that there is an enormous "unmet need" (as distinct from "unmet demand") for family planning services in less-developed countries. By their estimates, meeting this need would require substantially greater funding for these services in the less-developed countries than they currently receive. The advocates may be right, but no thanks to the strength of their analysis. Their method of computing "unmet need" is, typically, to measure by sample questionnaire the fraction of married women in various societies who say they are not using modern means of contraception and also say that they want no more children, or that they wish to delay the birth of their next child. It is by no means clear that this method measures either the unmet demand for modern contraceptives, or the fraction of the female population exposed to unwanted pregnancy. Women not using modern contraceptives may be practicing traditional (albeit less pleasant or less effective) means of birth control.

Western fertility questionnaires, moreover, have a mixed record in eliciting accurate responses from poor people in less-developed societies. It is sometimes the case that illiterate villagers, whether in deference or out of politeness, attempt to please the interrogator with their answers. At other times questions are pursued in a way that can be of only limited relevance in the society in question. Most fertility questionnaires, for example, are devoted entirely and exclusively to the responses of women, even in areas where the tradition of male dominance invests much of the power of decision with husbands, or even fathers-in-law. Still other parts of such questionnaires may probe into areas of interest and salience to the interviewer but be of limited intuitive meaning to the respondent. In the World Fertility Survey, for example, over a third of the fecund women who indicated that they wanted no more children also said that they would like to have a larger number than they presently had. Given such problems, the results produced by fixed-form, rapidly conducted questionnaires are notoriously unstable. A major survey in Indonesia, to cite another example, found that fewer than half the women interviewed gave the same figure for "ideal family size" when they were re-questioned four months later.

In places like Taiwan, Korea, and Hong Kong, family planning programs have been widely credited with bringing birthrates down. But fertility decline was underway in these areas before their family planning programs had been established. In India, by contrast, national fertility declines did not become unmistakable until decades after the adoption of the national planning program—giving the advocates of the program the opportunity to ascribe *all* change in fertility to governmental birth control efforts. In still other countries, like Mexico and Thailand, the establishment of family planning programs coincided with the onset of rapid fertility decline. It is not clear whether the alleged success of these programs was due to government commitment to push for contraception, or from a change in national attitudes toward family size and spacing (which may have prompted the establishment of the programs in the first place).

In any case, in a growing number of countries, the governments do not seem satisfied with the family choices parents have been making. The chosen governmental instruments for altering fertility have ranged from campaigns of information, propaganda, and exhortation, to the exercise of incentives and penalties to promote desired patterns of fertility, to the use of legal sanctions against parenting, to the refinement and application of techniques of force against would-be mothers and fathers. Such inducements may or may not, under the given circumstances, be successful in changing national fertility patterns, or in bringing birth trends more nearly into

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consonance with the numerical goals targeted by government planners. But to the extent that they are effective in enforcing involuntary adjustments in the behavior of parents, they may be seen to reduce—not raise—current standards of living, and to compromise, rather than advance, future prospects for development.

V

What, in the final analysis, can be said with confidence about the consequences of demographic change on the prospects for social and economic development in the less-developed regions? Among policy makers, ideology has often been substituted for judgment, and emotion has overpowered caution, in the assessment of changes in population, with all that these changes seem to imply about the fate of national, ethnic, or local populations. It may therefore be appropriate to conclude with a few cautious observations.

First, the obvious: population change is a form of social change. Though the implications of population change are profound—no less so because it involves the generation and termination of human life—it is a form of change that seems slow by comparison with many others. A rate of population increase of 4 percent is considered extremely rapid; a rate of price inflation of 4 percent a year is, in most developing countries today, considered to be fortuitously slow. Moreover, for all the uncertainties of long-term population forecasting, the likely change in size and composition of a national population can be predicted over the course of the coming calendar year with far greater certainty than can changes in the harvest, the gross national product, the unemployment rate, the foreign exchange rate, or the demand for any particular product. Population change, like other forms of social change, emphasizes the ability of individuals, communities, and governments to manage and to cope. For populations that cope poorly with change, any quickening in the pace of change—including the pace of demographic change—is likely to prove difficult and perhaps even costly to society as a whole. Yet coping with change—or as Nobel Laureate in Economics Theodore W. Schultz put it, "dealing with disequilibria"—is in itself an integral part of the process of modern economic development. It is a learning process that generates real economic returns. To the extent that population change may prompt this learning process, it can even contribute to the acceleration of material development in a given society.

Second, insofar as demographic change may assume a variety of manifestations, its form in the modern era has typically been both comparatively benign and relatively advantageous for the purposes of economic growth. Worldwide population growth has been propelled principally by falling death rates, which is to say, by rising expectation of life at birth. Rising life expectancy is itself an indication of improved general levels of health, and is suggestive of other changes in living conditions supportive of general improvements in health. Improvements in health, moreover, may figure importantly in augmenting the human capital upon which the potential productivity of different populations ultimately rests. Augmenting human capital does not assure the acceleration of material advance—that will depend on many other things, including the environment of governmental policies in which human talents are set to work. But improved health, and its handmaidens, may well make it possible for the pace of material advance, under auspicious circumstances, to be quickened.

Third, much of the current discourse on the population "problem" seems implicitly to assume that the elimination of poverty may be served by preventing the birth of poor people. This appears to be a fundamental error—an elementary fallacy of composition. Mass affluence is typically associated with great transformations of society, economy, and individual outlook. The role of the family, the status of women, and the patterns of fertility typically change in the course of this transformation. But the extent to which reductions in fertility themselves *stimulate* improvements in human productivity is far less clear, either for given families or whole societies.

Fourth, while the economic consequences of overall rates of population growth are often ambiguous or obscure, the impact of smaller groups within larger populations on the economic well-being of the whole society, or the impact of differential rates of growth within a national population on prospects for material advance, may be direct and important. The contribution of religious or ethnic minorities to innovation or economic advance, as Lord Peter Bauer of the London School of Economics has emphasized, has often been vastly greater than would be expected by their numbers on society. By the same token, conflict between rival groups within a society may be intensified by differences in their net reproduction rates; such differences may have implications for the tenor of civil life or the composition and character of the national directorate, factors that may play a decisive role in determining the climate for development.

Finally, the likelihood of accruing unambiguously positive benefits from an active population policy devoted to shaping the demographic composition of society seems extremely low. This is not only because it has as yet proved impossible to define consistently the notion of the "optimum" population upon which activist efforts to shape the demographic composition of society seem in theory to rest. In its applications to date, population policy in the less-developed countries has often attempted to alter through demography social problems whose causes can be traced to

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ill-advised or injurious governmental policies. It is a peculiar theory of the "second best" that would suggest that the fertility decisions of a nation's parents must be altered because the distorting and inefficient policies promoted by its government are immutable. Yet thinking very similar to this seems to have governed the formulation of some of the population policies put into effect in the years since World War II.

In principle, this problem could easily be corrected. But even if it were, difficulties would remain with the notion of an active "population policy." Interventions in education, health, housing, regional planning, and other areas may have demographic consequences, but they are justified on other grounds. On what grounds would a policy whose primary aim is to induce demographic change be justified? The acceleration of economic growth is one possibility (although, if current patterns of fertility reveal the preferences of households within the society about current and deferred consumption, it is not immediately apparent why such preferences should be ignored or overridden).

Consider what an active policy to shape population in the service of accelerated economic growth would require. One possible justification would be "market failure": the possibility that, through distortions and externalities in the price structure of the economy, parents are encouraged to rear the "wrong" number of children. There are good reasons for overcoming market failures—entirely apart from whatever effect such reforms may have on childbearing. Attacking distortions and externalities directly, furthermore, would seem preferable to compounding these distortions through "compensating" economic penalties or rewards for additional births. And it would be necessary to ask, in a systematic fashion, whether there would be any reason to assume that in the absence of distortions and market imperfections, parents would not be able to "price" the birth of their child correctly.

To make the economic case for an active population policy, population planners would ultimately need to center their arguments on estimates of the economic value of human life. They would have to show, in effect, what would be the "present value" of a child born today, and also to show how that present value would be changed by altering the size of the baby's cohort of peers, or the cohorts following. If attempted seriously, this would prove to be an extraordinarily difficult task. Assessing the present value of any given, innate, physical investment over the course of its projected "life" is at best a tentative and highly uncertain undertaking. Albert Hirschmann, the eminent economist at the Institute of Advanced Studies, has noted that many of the factors that affect the actual productivity of an investment project once it is in operation are not foreseen in even the most detailed exercises in planning. If estimating the present value of innate objects is difficult, how much more uncertain it must be to ascribe such a value to an entity imbued with life!

Long-term economic forecasts are notoriously inaccurate. Japan, Taiwan, and Korea are among the nations that defied all expectations of informed foreign observers in the postwar period; by the same token, Burma and Ghana, two of the countries most frequently cited as likely economic successes after independence, did an equally creditable job of disappointing the experts. It is hard to imagine how a population planner would have arrived at an accurate assessment of the present value of a birth in Korea in 1955, much less make confident assertions about the ways in which the present value of that birth would be changed through alterations in the contemporary Korean birthrate. Population planning for "development," it seems, is easiest to envision under the assumptions of total technological stasis, absence of social change, and rigid restriction of social choices and alternatives. Yet such assumptions, in themselves, contradict the method of economic development and defeat its purpose, which is, in essence, the extension of human choice. FT

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Books In Review

War in the Classroom

BATTLEGROUND: THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT, ITS OPPONENTS, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR OUR SCHOOLS. By STEPHEN BATES. *Poseidon Press. 365 pp. $24.*

Reviewed by **Charles L. Glenn**

THE 1983 protest by a group of parents in Hawkins County, Tennessee, against certain stories and themes in the public school reading series prescribed for their children, and the subsequent litigation referred to as the *Mozert* case, are recounted in an almost novelistic way in this new book by Stephen Bates. While dramatic, the account may be too detailed for readers who have no special interest in such cases, but two aspects of the book deserve the attention of everyone concerned with the place of religion in American society. One hopes that they would also speak eloquently to all who love liberty and respect the rights of parents.

The first aspect of general significance is a chapter on what is often referred to as "the textbook controversy"—the concern with how textbooks present religion and other central features of American life. Bates draws upon the classic study by New York University psychology professor Paul Vitz (*Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks,* 1986), along with a variety of other studies to show that the plaintiffs in *Mozert* were not unjustified in believing that textbooks favor every viewpoint except the traditional Christian one. The series used in Hawkins County, for example, discussed witchcraft and encouraged children to write their own incantations "to stimulate imagination and creativity." One can imagine the outcry, a lawyer for the plaintiffs pointed out, if the same effect had been sought by encouraging children to compose a prayer to Jesus.

The censoring of religious elements in textbooks is of course only one aspect of the general purging of anything related to traditional religion (and especially Christianity) from public schools since the postwar Supreme Court rulings on school prayer and devotional Bible reading. School administrators went much farther than the Court directed, and textbook publishers in turn took care to prevent any reflection of the beliefs and practices of half or more of the American people to creep into their books. Even identifying a character in a story as a born-again Christian, testified the supervising editor of the series to which the *Mozert* plaintiffs raised their objections, would "raise questions of the separation of church and state." Of course it would do nothing of the sort, but it is significant that such a thing could be believed.

IT IS IRONIC, as Bates points out, that the purging of religion should have occurred at the same time that publishers were rushing to make their textbooks more "inclusive." "Of role models highlighted for special attention in sidebars in several social studies books, more than half were women and all the men were Hispanic, Indian, or black; not a single white male was included." In basal readers, a woman is "less likely to be a mother than to be a spy, shepherd, or anthropologist."

Publishers were responding to intense pressures from groups concerned that they were underrepresented in text materials, and at times it seemed that nothing could satisfy the protesters. When one reading book carefully balanced 146 female characters against 146 male characters, feminists charged that among the *animal* characters males were too heavily repre-

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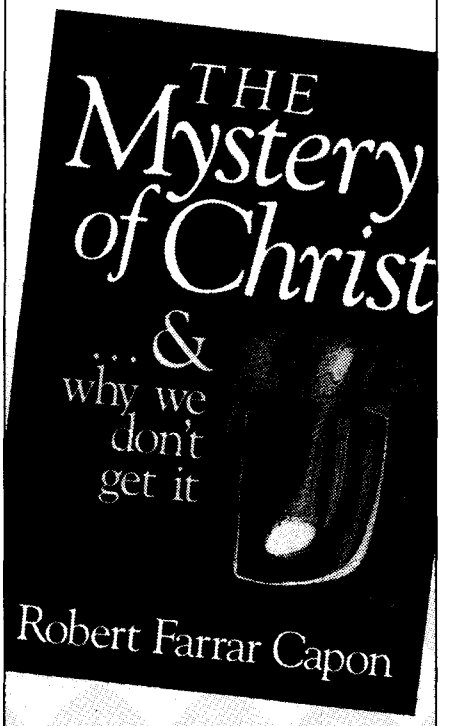
*"An exuberant, triumphant theology."**



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sented. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* was condemned "as sexist (the only disobedient character is male), ageist (the crotchety farmer is old), 'racist by omission' (all the bunnies are the same color), and materialistic (Peter is hunting for food)." The disabled were unfairly portrayed in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Peter Pan, A Christmas Carol, Heidi, Treasure Island,* and *Richard III.* The recent controversy over the "Rainbow Curriculum" in New York City bears witness to the willingness of the education establishment to seek to accommodate variant sexual practices within the schools' portrayal of the diversity to be valued.

It is easy to mock such excesses of political correctness, but they have profoundly shaped the world that is presented to children in public school classrooms. The one group of concerned parents and citizens *not* granted a hearing is that which calls for a fair representation of traditional religion. And this relates to the second aspect of Bates' account that has broader significance.

To the textbook editors whose internal communications were obtained by the plaintiffs through discovery, the concerns of religiously traditional parents did not deserve to be treated as morally equivalent to those of feminists, racial minority groups, and homosexuals. The former were considered "censors" of the kind associated with totalitarian societies, while the latter "seek to improve our educational institutions and textbooks in a positive manner." Publishers were instructed not to "lose sight of the long-range goals of education in the face of any one group's self-serving interests, however vocal it may be," unless, of course, the group was politically acceptable.

This attitude was reflected strongly, as Bates shows, in the media portrayal of the plaintiffs in the *Mozert* case and thus in the way that most Americans came to understand the issues at stake. The protesting parents were presented as would-be censors—though they were asking only that their own children be allowed to read alternative materials—while school officials were presented as heroic guardians of liberty. The "spin" was the opposite of that given to situations in which, say, black parents protest the treatment of African-American history and culture in public school classrooms.

PERHAPS THE strangest twist of the whole business was the consensus in much of the media comment that in challenging the judgment of education professionals about what was good for their children, the parents were somehow behaving undemocratically. What could

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be more in the American tradition than such insistence upon following one's own conscience even against established authority?

It is the central irony of the debate over multiculturalism in American education that its advocates show little sympathy for the manifestation of culture that is of most enduring importance to groups within American society, namely, their religious beliefs and traditions.

Studies have demonstrated time and again that while other aspects of heritage, language, and culture are shed in the course of two or three generations, religion continues to shape how a hundred million Americans understand the world and order their lives. The banishing of this deep-rooted source of identity and meaning from the curriculum accounts for the lightweight nature of most multicultural education.

The perception of the stakes in the *Mozert* case, as Bates shows, was distorted by elite prejudice against "fundamentalists" who were acting in ways that, for members of other groups, would have been likely to have gained support in the same circles. The assumption that "fundamentalists, whatever they might say, are always conniving to force their beliefs on others and create a Christian nation" was more powerful than any inclination to support parents seeking to gain some accommodation for their children from an unresponsive bureaucracy.

The plaintiff parents in the *Mozert* case were not especially attractive characters, as Bates' detailed account reveals, and some of their concerns with textbooks were easy to mock, but the issue that they raised will continue to trouble American public schools. As I wrote before the case was decided against the parents, "We have set ourselves an impossible task in seeking to provide a single model of education that is to be at once capable of nurturing character and civic virtue and yet inoffensive to the convictions of any parent. We might congratulate ourselves—as did the attorney for the Hawkins County School Board—on the fact that parents who object can always have recourse to private schools, but this is tantamount to making the exercise of conscience and of parental rights contingent upon the ability to afford a private education" (*The Public Interest*, Summer 1987).

Bates argues at the conclusion of his account of the case that the lower court judge was correct in calling for the school to accommodate parents with alternative readings. This, though appropriate, would not go far enough; only through real educational freedom can schools stand for something

VERITATIS SPLENDOR is a moment of special significance for the whole Church. Briefly but profoundly the Encyclical recalls the essential characteristics of human freedom, conscience, and the fundamental values intrinsic to the dignity of human persons and the truth of their acts. Its reflections center on its unambiguous reaffirmation that there are some kinds of human action which should never be chosen, whatever one's circumstances and further intentions. That teaching is today widely questioned and denied.

As John Paul II observes, there is here no question of imposing a philosophical or theological system and, like other decisive acts of magisterial judgment, his long-meditated Encyclical will itself be accompanied by theological reflection and interpretation. The document describes selected examples of theological opinions inconsistent with what Scripture and Tradition testify about intrinsically evil acts. Fruitful discernment will therefore proceed, not so much by inquiring whether a given philosophical, exegetical or theological thesis is among those selected examples, but by inquiring whether that thesis can really cohere with the Encyclical's teaching on intrinsically evil acts.

As members of the faculty of the American section of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, we are among those addressed by the Encyclical's call to "clarify ever more fully the biblical foundations, the ethical significance and the anthropological concerns which underlie the moral doctrine and the vision of man set forth by the Church." This echoes the Institute's original mandate, which we pursue with full assent to the teaching "today being restated with the authority of the Successor of Peter."

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and thus educate confidently and well, with the full support of parents.

The United States is almost unique, among nations with universal schooling, in providing free education only through the monopolistic suppliers we call local school systems. Whatever merits this may have had in a more culturally homogeneous time, it is an infallible formula today for the removal of decision-making about schooling from parents to "experts." It is difficult to think of any greater threat to the real enjoyment of freedom by parents or to the ability of our schools to educate their children to become free men and women. Among the first successful demands of citizens in Central and Eastern Europe, as Communist regimes fell, was for public support for whatever schools parents might create or choose for their children; strange that we Americans do not value freedom—or schools that are morally coherent and purposeful—so highly.

Why Churches Fail

A GENERATION OF SEEKERS: THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS OF THE BABY BOOM GENERATION. By WADE CLARK ROOF. *HarperCollins. 311 pp. $20.*

BEYOND ESTABLISHMENT: PROTESTANT IDENTITY IN A POST-PROTESTANT AGE. Edited by JACKSON CARROLL and WADE CLARK ROOF. *Westminster/John Knox Press. 361 pp. $19.99 paper.*

Reviewed by **Benton Johnson**

IT IS WELL known that the serious decline in membership of the "mainline," or liberal, branches of American Protestantism is largely due to the loss of a substantial portion of their adherents who were born after World War II. Now sociologist Wade Clark Roof's *A Generation of Seekers*, based on his recent study of the religion of the baby boom generation, shows that a sizable proportion of Catholics and conservative Protestants have also left the religious traditions in which they were brought up. Fully 42 percent of Catholic baby boomers are currently unchurched, which is a mere three percentage points lower than the figure for mainline Protestants. Conservative Protestants are least likely to have severed their ties with organized religion, but 36 percent of them have also done so, a rate that is surprisingly high in view of the widespread belief that their segment of American Christianity is rapidly growing.

The real advantage enjoyed by conservative Protestantism among baby boomers is its ability to limit losses by attracting dropouts from other branches of Christianity. Although only 28 percent of baby boomers were brought up as conservative Protestants, that tradition now includes 36 percent of baby boomers who are active in a church. Catholic and mainline

BENTON JOHNSON *is Professor of Sociology at the University of Oregon.*

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Protestant congregations, on the other hand, contain a smaller proportion of the church-going population than they did when baby boomers were in Sunday School.

Mainline Protestant losses are especially severe, a fact that has inspired several recent studies, including those contained in *Beyond Establishment*, edited by Roof and Jackson Carroll, which focuses on the erosion of denominational culture and identity. The book's sixteen chapters, all by different authors, treat such features of denominational life as campus ministry, church-related colleges, women's organizations, theological schools, and foreign missions.

THE CHAPTERS are of uneven quality, but a few offer much food for thought. Among the most provocative is that by Daniel V. A. Olson, which takes issue with the notion that modern urban life weakens all forms of religion. It weakens, he argues, only those religions that are minimally differentiated from the secular culture, but it actually facilitates the gathering of critical masses of people with distinctive religious views who are motivated to create and maintain strong group ties. As a case in point, today's rapidly growing evangelical megachurches are almost entirely urban phenomena.

Although for several generations mainline Protestant culture has resembled that of the larger middle class, Catholic teaching has been at odds with this culture on various issues. Roof's baby boom data show, however, that large numbers of Catholics have broken decisively with many of the Church's teachings. By overwhelming majorities, younger Catholics believe that one can be a good Catholic without going to mass every Sunday and without obeying the Church's teaching on divorce, remarriage, and abortion. Conservative Protestant baby boomers are the most likely of all to oppose the secular drift of the times, but Roof reports that few of them endorse traditional Protestant norms against dancing, drinking, and movie-going, and strictness about Sabbath observance. Moreover, a multitude of baby boomers, both inside and outside the churches, reject doctrinally assertive forms of faith. Almost half agree with the statement that "all religions are equally true and good."

Roof's book is informative and well-written, but its two major interpretive themes are open to question. One of them is the hypothesis that the countercultural shift of the 1960s is responsible for the patterns now observed in the religious proclivities of younger Americans. The other theme, reflected in the title of the book, is the contention that most baby boomers are "seekers" in the realm of religion.

The counterculture did make a difference in American life, but it is likely that the trends Roof docu-

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ments have older sources as well. In any event, a careful reading of the text suggests that the counterculture thesis is only the best of a variety of rather weak statistically grounded "explanations" of the trends. Roof's seekership thesis seems even less well-grounded, unless one defines seekers as those who have ever questioned anything they learned about religion when they were children. Seekers are usually defined, however, as people for whom the religious quest is a central and compelling concern. By this more common definition, only a tiny fraction of Roof's baby boomers qualify as seekers. A very large number of religious dropouts, for example, simply drifted away from church without knowing exactly why. Many rarely discuss religion at all. Seekers do not hesitate to drop old identities and assume new ones, but the great bulk of baby boomers have retained the denominational identities of their childhood. They may be angry unchurched Catholics or apathetic unchurched Presbyterians, but they still think of themselves as Catholics and Presbyterians. Indeed, the persistence of religious identities, however expressed, underlies the religious ferment of our times—and may just offer an interesting, if at present cloudy, prospect for the future.

Communal Foundations

THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY. By ADAM SELIGMAN. *Free Press. 220 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Alan L. Mittleman**

ADAM SELIGMAN'S book, while primarily a theoretical, historical, and social inquiry into the notion of civil society, is motivated by a contemporary concern: namely, the felt need for a new representation of society in post-Communist Eastern Europe. Writing from Budapest, Seligman discusses whether the Western European—more precisely, Anglo-American—concept of civil society has relevance to the Eastern situation. In addition, he also means to contribute to the ongoing debate in America about the renewal of the public realm. By focusing on the history of the idea as well as the original social setting in which it took root, Seligman shows that civil society, whether as a description or as a norm, is not easily transportable.

Seligman begins by tracing both the origins and the metamorphoses of the concept of civil society, pointing out that the late medieval breakdown of Catholic *universitas* required, at least among Protestants, a new symbolic representation of the nature of society, i.e., *communitas.* Locke is the pivotal thinker here. For Locke, society can no longer be seen as part and parcel of the eternal, divinely ordered nature of things. Rather, it comes to be seen as a human product, brought into being through choice and action. Furthermore, it is arrived at through the free consent of morally autonomous individuals. Arising out of a process of differentiation from transcendent order, the idea of society stands, from the very moment of its birth, in a dialectical tension with the concept of the individual. The problem then becomes how to reconcile a philosophical anthropology of individualism with the mutuality and interrelatedness of society, and the concept of *civil* society is that synthesis by which these theses have been bridged.

For Locke, individuals are compelled to consent to community by natural law. Lockean natural law, still anchored in theism, regulates both individual conscience and society. Thus the concept of civil society is one born out of a peculiar blend of reason and revelation.

THIS STILL-MEDIEVAL link between *communitas* and *universitas* did not last. Civil society was to undergo a growing immanentization in the thinkers of the Scottish En-

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lightenment. Ferguson, for example, locates the individual's will to community in natural affection, thereby severing the link with transcendence. Individuals can, in this view, identify their own private good with the common good because nature has constituted them to enjoy the approbation of their peers. That is what a shared, moral reason teaches. But with Hume, even this anthropological basis in reason retreats and we are left with passional individuals pursuing their own good in a utilitarian way. Seligman traces the further transformation of the concept of civil society in Smith and Kant, the latter of whom tries to rescue it from Hume, and in Hegel and Marx, who resolve this inherently unstable concept in statist and utopian directions.

In Seligman's view, then, the concept of civil society is a product of secularization. It is the attempt to provide a moral self-representation of society absent a transcendent, or at least a theistic, reference that is more than peripheral. Seligman, a Weberian-oriented sociologist, simply assumes a straight-line secularization theory and focuses on the internal problem of the "civil society tradition," namely, once society is held to derive from the choice of individual moral agents, sociality per se is secondary, epiphenomenal. Autonomy and solidarity as ideals are mutually exclusive.

Seligman explores this problem in a most insightful way. He asks why individuals should trust in or sacrifice for their society. In what ways do we reconcile our private interests with the demands of social existence? Many of the distinctive problems of modern societies, he tells us, e.g., the expansion of welfare state entitlements versus traditional free market liberalism, reflect this fundamental tension between a desire for a common good and the profound individualism of our culture.

But returning to Seligman's main methodological premise, the question arises as to whether he has too quickly excluded religion from any significant role in the support of civil society as an ideal or, even more important, as reality. Not that he is inattentive to the role of religion. As he moves from pure history of ideas to historical sociology, his method is thoroughly Weberian. In his second chapter, he concentrates on "ascetic Protestantism" (i.e., American Puritanism) as the movement that gave the most explicit and enduring historical shape to civil society. Puritanism's doctrine of grace supported the highly developed individualism that gave credence to the representation of early American society as a voluntary community of the consenting elect. For it was such a society, when secularized, that became the model for civil society. Thus the saints' experience of enabling the participation of the

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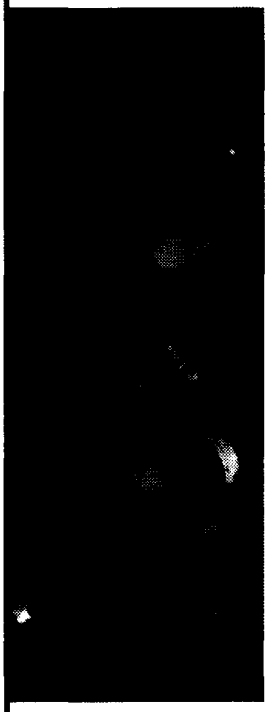

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unregenerate through the halfway covenant serves as a model for the formal right of political participation in society.

BUT WITH every turn of Seligman's argument, as with Weber's, religion is held to be a powerful force only in ages past. Indeed, Seligman is pessimistic about the future usefulness of civil society as a normative construct in part because of the persistence of the religious identities of primordial groups. In Eastern Europe, for example, the pole of individuality is insufficiently developed. People are too embedded in ethnicity or in religion. The same is true in Israel, where a civil society that could embrace both Arabs and Jews is all but negated by strong tribal loyalties. Primordial groups, like publically consequential religiosity, are incompatible, in Seligman's view, with the autonomous individualism the civil society tradition has required.

In America, on the other hand, a strong tradition of respect for individuals as morally autonomous beings frustrates contemporary attempts to provide social solidarity and hence a socially informed sense of identity. Seligman dismisses philosophical communitarianism as a more or less doomed attempt in some degree to preserve, yet simultaneously to overcome, the individualist pole of the tradition. Similarly, Jürgen Habermas' effort to salvage Enlightenment reason—by means of what Habermas calls discourse ethics—provides too thin a reed to support common values, public trust, and civic virtue. Seligman considers whether, in a time of atomized anomie, new social movements such as feminism or gay rights might provide an incipient civil society for their adherents. He is, however, quite pessimistic about this possibility. Movements like gay rights in his view thrive on the "destructuring" of the public realm, that is, on the blurring of the distinction of public and private, and lead to a subsequent destructuring of the private realm. To be real as private, a phenomenon must become present as public. This blurring of distinctions, a philosophical pillar of postmodernism, is antithetical to civil society.

Thus, in the author's view, civil society seems to be a trope that has run its course. It developed prior to the Enlightenment, but was always dependent on an anthropology that stressed a universalized Reason. Because society was rational, individuals could associate their own good with a social good and thereby have grounds of trust in their institutions. Absent that universal and the confidence that goes with it, society can no longer represent itself as "civil."

But what follows from this? The birth of the idea of civil society in dissenting Protestantism with its notions of covenanting and "federal liberty," while historically irretrievable, ought to caution us against dismissing the significance of religion to civil society. Seligman admits a continuing salience in the form of American civil religion, but he sees this as vestigial (as it well may be). Nonetheless, between some fundamentalists' dreams of cultural hegemony and the anomie of secular postmodernism, it is credible to believe that religion will play a role wherever free societies believe in themselves enough to remain free. Seligman seems completely unaware of the work of thinkers such as Reinhold Niebuhr and John Courtney Murray. Without such a trans-secular alternative, the iron cage of Weber that is here invoked by Seligman may well be our common, if uncivil, future.

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The New Populism

ECHOES OF DISCONTENT: JESSE JACKSON, PAT ROBERTSON, AND THE RESURGENCE OF POPULISM. By ALLEN D. HERTZKE. *CQ Press. 293 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **Dean C. Curry**

IN A RECENT book about the 1992 elections, two veteran political correspondents describe an electorate in a nasty mood, "as mad as hell." The fact of the matter, however, is that Americans have always been peeved about their politicians and their politics. In short, discontent is an American political tradition, as American as apple pie.

More often than not popular discontent has centered on a specific grievance and the inability, or unwillingness, of the political status quo to address it. When such a situation arises, the instinct of the aggrieved is to look outside the political establishment and form a new political movement. Indeed, American history is littered with short-lived third parties, each

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meant to defend a principle or attack an ill perpetuated or ignored by the political powers that be. Some of the more notable of these expressions of discontent include the American [Know Nothing] Party, founded in the decade before the Civil War to counter the influence of immigrants; the Prohibition Party, founded after the Civil War to rid America of the scourge of demon rum; the Populist Party of the 1890s, which sought to remedy the lot of debtor farmers; and, in this century, the pro-segregation States' Rights Party of 1948.

Each of these bursts of indignation is part of a larger populist tradition that is as old as the Republic itself. Populism has no political agenda per se. It is more a disposition: specifically, a distaste for existing patterns of power and privilege. In its simplest guise, populist politics is about the concerns, interests, and values of the little guy, the common man.

Though populist impulses go as far back as the colonial era, the contemporary tradition was born with the fiery rhetoric of William Jennings Bryan in the 1890s. Since Bryan, populist movements have often reflected a blend of economic progressivism and moral traditionalism. "The great political questions," Bryan insisted, "are in the final analysis great moral questions."

To THE chagrin of the disciples of secularism, religiously informed values continue to influence the politics of the common man in America. This reality is the subject of Allen Hertzke's recent study of the populist politics of Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson, *Echoes of Discontent.*

To be sure, Jackson and Robertson are not the only populist voices on the American political landscape today—witness Ross Perot—but over the past decade both have tapped into a wellspring of discontent among those threatened by what Hertzke perceptively refers to as the "corrosive" and "exploitive" individualism championed by America's cultural elites. The unfettered individualism and moral relativism that characterizes modern America has outraged millions today who have witnessed an ongoing assault against traditional boundaries of belief and behavior.

In discussing the resurgence of populist politics associated with Jackson and Robertson, Hertzke, a University of Oklahoma political scientist, maintains that to focus on the ideological discord between these two preachers is to miss their common crusade against "the moral hollowness and atomizing tendencies of liberal culture and politics." The bulk of *Echoes of Discontent* is devoted to developing this thesis.

Hertzke's analysis is divided into seven chapters. The book's first two chapters examine the populist legacy, with a special focus on the relationship between religion and populism. Subsequent chapters look at the worldview of Jackson and Robertson, the role of their respective church affiliates in the 1988 campaign, the relationship between their activists and the major parties, and an opinion survey of their respective followers. Hertzke concludes with a summary chapter in which he addresses the stresses and challenges of contemporary liberalism.

ALTHOUGH MUCH of the author's biographical information on Jackson and Robertson will be familiar to readers, his discussion is often thought provoking. For example, Hertzke suggests that Jesse Jackson's self-identification with the dispossessed finds its roots in Jackson's own painful childhood as the illegitimate son of an unmarried teenage girl. Hertzke also highlights the impact of Jackson's pervasively religious upbringing on his later political thinking.

Hertzke points out that because

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of the world in which Jackson was raised—religious, rural, Southern, and black—it is not surprising that his thinking has exhibited "a strong element of culturally conservative themes," including a critique of "boundless liberalism" and pleas for America's underclass to recover a "moral center." To support this contention, Hertzke quotes Jackson as saying that "people who respect their creator . . . behave differently."

If these themes reflect Jackson's upbringing and were once a part of his rhetorical repertoire, they are certainly infrequently heard from him today. The reason for this Hertzke locates in Jackson's ambitions. Put bluntly, Jackson has sold his political soul to the left wing of the Democratic party, and, enthusiastically embraced by the left, he has been "transformed by it."

Though he tries to reconcile his religiously grounded vision with his embrace of the cultural agenda of the left, there is a transparent tension in Jackson's politics that surely accounts for his limited electoral success outside of the black community. In this regard, Hertzke notes one of the great paradoxes of American politics today, namely, that blacks—among the most traditionally religious communities within American society—continue to identify with an increasingly secular and culturally liberal Democratic party. Hertzke acknowledges that Jackson's sympathy for the left's agenda on the family, gay rights, and abortion has generated tensions among culturally conservative black church leaders, but he argues that racial pride has proved a more potent appeal among Jackson's black constituents.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, Hertzke demonstrates that Pat Robertson, alone among Republican Party presidential aspirants, has made significant inroads in gaining support from black Americans. Nearly 20 percent of Robertson's backers come from the black community, a figure that is more than double the support of any other Republican. And while more than 90 percent of black voters supported Jackson in recent primaries, Hertzke notes that "many of these same black voters register remarkable sympathy for Robertson. . . ."

Robertson's appeal among blacks is correctly attributed to religious and cultural attitudes. His jeremiads against the collapse of moral absolutes resonates with many black Americans who have experienced firsthand the despair and destruction wrought by the collapse of shared public norms. Even more significant, in terms of America's culture wars, is the fact that large numbers of blacks share Pat Robertson's religious commitments. On any given Sunday a large majority of black Americans attend church. Sixty-five percent of black Americans identify themselves as fundamentalists, compared with less than 30 percent of the white population. On nearly all religious indicators, including intensity of religious commitment and belief in the Bible, black Americans are more conservative than are whites.

THE IMPLICATIONS of this fact for American politics and its culture wars are enormous. Sadly, though not unexpectedly, these truths have been all but ignored by most in the media and the academy. For this reason alone, *Echoes of Discontent* is an important corrective to the dominant culture's bias against religion and religiously grounded explanations of social life.

Echoes of Discontent is also a good primer for those wishing to broaden their understanding of two popular preachers and the populist movements with which they are associated. This much of the book is interesting and frequently enlightening. What is less satisfying, however, is the author's overly sympathetic treatment of his subjects. Hertzke is correct to place Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson in the tradition of American populist protest. Likewise, his broader theoretical conclusion—namely, that democracy is only as strong as the religiously informed values, beliefs, and habits that sustain it—is sound. But Hertzke is less convincing in proving his thesis that Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson represent a similar "communitarian response" to excessive individualism. This is arguably true of Pat Robertson, and perhaps the early Jesse Jackson. However, it is not true of

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the recent Jesse Jackson, the Jackson too often beholden to a cultural agenda destructive of moral absolutes and, ultimately, of democratic community itself.

Homesick in Miami

THE EXILE: CUBA IN THE HEART OF MIAMI. By DAVID RIEFF. *Simon & Schuster. 220 pp. $21.*

CITY ON THE EDGE: THE TRANSFORMATION OF MIAMI. By ALEJANDRO PORTES and ALEX STEPICK. *University of California Press. 281 pp. $25.*

Reviewed by **John J. Miller**

AS THE Fidel Castro deathwatch reaches its thirty-fifth anniversary, the Cuban-American community in South Florida begins to look at its situation with an uneasy sense of permanence. For many years the declaration "Next year in Havana!" rolled off Cuban tongues like a mantra, but in recent times it has fallen into disuse and even become a cruel joke. The end of Castro could arrive at any moment, but it has seemed this way for decades. The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe briefly rejuvenated the hopes of Cubans living in the United States, though it now looks as if their homeland will not go the way of Romania or Hungary, but of North Korea—a global anachronism somehow clinging to power despite the sharp turns of history.

Large numbers of Cubans have gazed toward their native island from American shores since 1959, when Castro deposed Fulgencio Batista and thousands of middle-class Cubans fled to the United States. Since then, these Cubans have assumed the look of a remarkably accomplished immigrant community—they enjoy high levels of income, employment, and home ownership, among other indicators of success. They dominate the political life of Miami and Dade County. And considering their numbers, they wield enormous influence in Washington, where they play a major role in

JOHN J. MILLER *is Associate Director of the Manhattan Institute's Center for the New American Community, based in Washington, D.C.*

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shaping foreign policy towards Cuba.

Despite all this, a sorrow grips them. They are not voluntary immigrants, but exiles forced from Cuba by the rise of a brutal autocrat. Whereas immigrants typically try to forget their pasts and forge new futures, exiles try to remember their histories and recover what they have lost. "Immigrants want to assimilate because, by and large, they have brought with them unhappy memories of their native countries. . . . We thought *Cuba* was better," Cuban-American banker Luis Botifoll tells David Rieff in *The Exile: Cuba in the Heart of Miami*, Rieff's impressionistic and insightful profile of Cuban America.

The continued rule of Castro leaves the Cuban Americans in a state of suspended animation. Many of them view Miami as a sort of halfway house, a place to hang their hats before an imminent return. But as the hiatus grows longer and their American-born children grow older, the exile community stands at a crossroads. They have fiercely maintained their old ways and refused to immerse themselves in American culture—"to assimilate was to accept that the exile was over, and, on a political level, that Fidel Castro had won," writes Rieff—but they also fully integrated themselves into the South Florida economy. If Castro were to fall tomorrow and democratic reformers assume control of Havana, the Miami Cubans might contemplate returning. But their pocketbooks would tug on them with equal force.

THIS UNIQUE duality makes Cuban Americans—or are they American Cubans?—the citizens of two nations and no nation at once. They feel deeply grateful to the United States for providing almost unlimited opportunity, but it is, after all, not a home they chose willingly. "To watch a mostly Cuban-American crowd at a Miami Heat basketball game or at an event at the Orange Bowl or at the new Joe Robbie stadium in North Miami belting out 'The Star-Spangled Banner' was to witness what appeared on the surface like the most old-fashioned, fervent expression of immigrant patriotism," writes Rieff. Complexity lies just beneath, however. As architect Raul Rodriguez confides, "When the U.S. plays Cuba in some international sport, I don't know whom to root for. It's like being the child of a messy divorce."

For all its power, this duality is generational. It strongly holds onto Raul and his wife Ninon, but it only indirectly touches Ruly, their eleven-year-old, American-born son. Ruly barely knows Cuba. His parents have taken him on visits, but he does not seem to care for the place. He feels no bond with it. Unlike his father, he has absolutely no qualms about cheering for American teams that compete against Cuban teams. He has a poster of Michael Jordan in his bedroom, not a Cuban flag. When he heads off to college, he might meet a nice Anglo girl from Tampa and, like so many other young Cuban Americans, marry outside his ethnic group. Rieff reports that, sitting at the dinner table with the Rodriguez family, he "could feel the exile vanishing before me."

According to Tony Quiroga, Raul's business partner, "The exile is *already* over." Quiroga suggests to Rieff that the Miami Cubans have lost their fabled cohesiveness, though neither he nor Rieff fully examines this thesis. Truth be told, the demography of Cuba and Cuban America are not much alike. Social and racial divisions could very well keep these cousin populations from ever again intermingling. The exiles are mostly white and middle-class. The remaining Cuban population is over

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two-thirds black and mulatto, and largely poor. "I'm constantly aware here of how hard it is to get my fellow Cubans to accept the country's black heritage," says David Rosemond, a black Cuban who serves as vice president to the local United Way. "There's a distortion of memory, but there's also a 'bleaching' of it."

Rieff effectively captures the profound ambivalence of the exile community and rightly suggests that its future lies mostly in the multicultural United States, not a post-Castro Cuba. Despite its many strengths, however, the book contains several flaws. Rieff relies heavily on upper-middle-class, politically liberal sources. He correctly points out that the Miami Cubans represent no monolith—they are too often portrayed in the media as knee-jerk anti-Communist Republicans—but he fails to grasp fully the community's views on a whole range of pressing social matters, including its relations with blacks, whites, Haitians, and recent Central-American immigrants. And despite his having spent several years in Miami to research the book, it seems as if Rieff never set foot in a Catholic Church. His analysis of "the cult of Cubanness" remains quite good, but it might have been improved had he sought out a few more sources.

Sociologists Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick fill in some of these holes in *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami.* Their book addresses Miami's social landscape more than it does Cuban America specifically, but the authors do examine an internal rift that Rieff largely ignores: the Mariel boatlift generation. When a Havana bus driver rammed his vehicle through the gates of the Peruvian embassy and demanded political asylum in 1980, he set off an international crisis that still reverberates in Miami. Within days thousands of Cubans arrived at the embassy to claim refuge. An embarrassed Castro regime opened the port of Mariel to all Cubans wishing to leave and invited the Miami exiles to pick up their relatives. Before long, the famed "Freedom Flotilla" had ferried 125,000 Cubans to Florida in a Caribbean-style Dunkirk.

The Cubans who had already established themselves in Miami obviously felt—and still feel—an affinity for the *marielitos,* but many also think the newcomers have blemished the Cuban reputation. Castro, in fact, used the boatlift as an opportunity to rid his island of those he considered undesirable. Almost one-half had criminal backgrounds. Many others had engaged in homosexual relations, which are outlawed in Cuba. Castro himself was rather upfront about the departing citizens: "Those that are leaving from Mariel are the scum of the country . . . who are welcome to leave Cuba if any country will have them," he scoffed at a 1980 May Day celebration during the height of the migration.

Before the boatlift, Cubans had been widely trumpeted in the national press as a "model minority." They were staunch Cold War allies. Their businesses flourished. Miami emerged as a Renaissance city and became a popular tourist destination under Cuban influence. After the Mariel exodus, however, Cuban Americans found themselves ranked among the undesirables. A 1982 national poll found that Cubans placed dead last in the public's view of contributions made by different ethnic groups to the national welfare. Only 9 percent considered them "good for the country" and 59 percent deemed them "bad"—the exact opposite of Jewish poll numbers. "For a minority long accustomed to public praise, such opinions came as a rude awakening," write Portes and Stepick. Ever since, the *marielitos* and older Cubans have traded resentments.

Portes and Stepick ultimately come up short in the very places where Rieff is strongest. They aim their text primarily at an academic audience, but they also try to enliven their writing with storytelling and lengthy quotations. These aspects lend a human voice to what would otherwise be a rather dry volume, but they lack the sense of seamless prose craftsmanship that marks Rieff's work.

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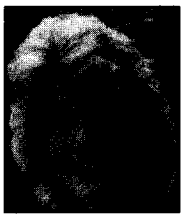

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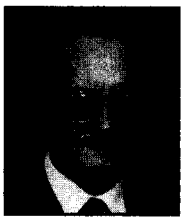

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It makes an essential companion volume, however, and together the two books offer a probing and textured look at an important ethnic group.

CUBAN America is a community in flux, slowly awakening to its permanence in South Florida. Awaiting a return many of them will never see, they have made Miami distinctly their own. "For those old enough to remember, there were ways in which the Miami of 1992 more closely resembled the Havana of 1958 than did contemporary Havana," notes Rieff. The exiles, in effect, have built a new Havana—a Havana they fondly remember—in the heart of Miami. For those who one day return to a post-Castro Cuba, many will feel homesick anew as they experience a second, and perhaps even more painful, exile.

Poisoned Eros

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP. By ALLAN BLOOM. *Simon & Schuster. 590 pp. $25.*

Reviewed by **Edward T. Oakes**

"CHRISTIANITY gave Eros poison to drink. He didn't die, but became vice." This is one of Nietzsche's more famous *obiter dicta*, and Allan Bloom finds the occasion to cite it more than once in this, his last book, finished shortly before his death in 1992. In our post-Nietzschean age of AIDS and rampant venereal disease, the remark now carries with it a certain unintentional irony, but one finishes reading Bloom's book not entirely sure why erotic relations nowadays are so dreary: Is it because of the relentless reductionism of Freud and Kinsey or because, as Nietzsche held, Eros and Institution will always be at war—and Christianity, with its rigorous stress on monogamy, now symbolizes for modern society the institution of marriage *par excellence*? In any event, Bloom on Freud is scathing:

> The enduring appeal of Freud, even to sophisticated people like Jacques Derrida, is the license he appears to give for talking endlessly about sex in relation to all things. He brings an unbeatable combination of sex, science, and the promise of being well-adjusted. Of course, reading Freud is the most neurotic experience one could imagine. Hardly a page or a line of Freud could

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J., *teaches in the Religious Studies Program at New York University.*

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> arouse erotic excitement in any normal reader. . . . It is all unmasking and showing the miserable effects of sex on our souls. In Freud, sex is the most important thing in our lives, but it is certainly not a beautiful one.

Bloom's counterweight to this dreary reductionism is the Great Tradition of Western letters from Plato to Tolstoy; and most of the book is devoted to individual chapters on such novelists as Rousseau, Austen, Stendahl, and Tolstoy, with a whole section devoted to the romantic comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare, and a concluding fugue on Plato's *Symposium*. While frequently heavy with *longeurs*, each of the chapters is also filled with brilliant flashes of insight. Particularly stirring are Bloom's remarks on the friendship of Prince Hal and Falstaff. Bloom says that Hal's abrupt snub of his old friend upon assuming the throne shows that they had never really been friends at all, for a "friendship [that] can be broken off so brutally proves that it is not a true friendship, which is the most durable of all attachments." And although Bloom seems too pessimistic about the prospects for a husband and wife becoming the best of friends, he nonetheless has a shrewd eye for the real difference between friendship and erotic attachment.

> The friend is similar to the lover in his recognition of his incompleteness and his need for exclusive attachment to another human being in order to attain fulfillment. Friendship, too, is imperious in its demands, but the experience of friendship is gentler, soberer, without frenzy. It, unlike love, is necessarily reciprocal. You can love without being loved in return, but you cannot be the friend of one who is not your friend. . . . Friendship, which seems for a variety of reasons to be easier, is actually rarer. Its pleasures are wholly spiritual, and the self-overcomings required for it are not powered by bodily passions.

This is certainly the voice of a man who must have been a remarkable teacher, and this book often displays the flashes of perception that made him so renowned a lecturer. (When he changed jobs from Cornell to Toronto, or from Toronto to Chicago, a vast caravan of graduate students would follow him, medieval-style, to his new position: they were there for him, not for the parchment.) And perhaps good teaching is as rare as a solid friendship. There is a magic to good teaching, as there is to friendship, that depends on a chemistry of grace nowhere near as common as is the erotic chemistry that leads to marriage:

> The eros of souls for each other, experienced by two human beings who can share insights into the nature of man and of all other things, is much less palpable, and hence less believable, than the eros of bodies. This disbelief on the part of most men is strongly reinforced by pseudoscientific theories that tell us that this experience is founded on an illusion and is derived from the eros of bodies, bodies transformed by a semi-miraculous faculty invented for the purpose, sublimation.

This attack on Freud's theory of sublimation is one of the major themes of Bloom's book, and will no doubt strike some readers as incorrigibly elitist (or as special pleading). But his response would be that this very objection is rooted in the pervasiveness of the reductive temper that we have inherited from Darwin, Marx, and Freud; and it is this temperament that makes us so easily bring human relations down to their least common denominator: the dilemmas of mere coupling for physiological satisfaction. But this simply will not do, as even a cursory glance at art should indicate and as Bloom points out in perhaps the wittiest section of the book:

> There is no reason to doubt Freud's genuine attachment to and pleasure in our artistic heritage. In his essay on Dostoyevsky, Freud exclaims that, before such greatness, psychoanalysis must lay down its arms. But he cannot resist picking them up again almost immediately and using them to round up the usual suspects, in Dostoyevsky's case, his father. . . . Freud's theory of sublimation is his desperate attempt to preserve the phenomenal richness of psychological life while remaining faithful to his clear and simply scientific reductionist causes. But it does not work. Even from the outset, the higher psychological life has to be made much cruder and less ambiguous than it actually is in order to admit of scientific treatment. And then Freud is unable clearly to distinguish unhealthy repression from healthy sublimation, unless it is by the degree of torment undergone and the social acceptability of the adjustment to it. [In short], he cannot explain what is sublime about sublimation.

But if reductionism is the enemy, and so lethal, what are we to make of the anti-religious polemic of the reductionist trinity of Marx, Freud, and Darwin? And what of Nietzsche, the philosopher who, with the exception of Plato and Rousseau, most influenced Bloom as teacher and thinker? Here one finishes *Love and Friendship* with the same sense of frustration as one experienced with *The Closing of the American Mind*: what role, if any, does theism play either in creating the dilemmas so well diag-

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nosed in these two books or in fashioning a therapeutic response to them? Bloom brilliantly describes the toxic nature of our erotic attachments and unsparingly strips bare the reasons for our inability to form lasting friendships, but he is rather vague about where an antidote might be found. He knows the symptoms, but it is far from certain that he can name the poison.

BRIEFLY NOTED

THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER: REDISCOVERING THE CENTRALITY OF THE CHURCH. By PETER J. LEITHART. *Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House (Phillipsburg, Pa.). 269 pp. $11.95 paper.*

If you appreciate Peter Leithart's sprightly opinion pieces in these pages, you will want to get this powerful manifesto of the Church's spiritual and cultural mission. As the author says, he is, all in all, a conservative, and that is why his searching and sometimes withering critique is aimed mainly at conservatism. This book is additional testimony to the vitality of Calvinist thought in the distinctly American context. We expect it will become a vade mecum for people who are earnest about "redeeming the time" in the face of the dark ages that may be upon us.

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THE OXFORD COMPANION TO THE BIBLE. Edited by BRUCE METZGER and MICHAEL COOGAN. *Oxford University Press. 874 pp. plus maps and index. $45.*

Of the making of Bible dictionaries there is no end. And a good thing, too. Each has its peculiar take on the details of the unfathomable, and each its strengths and weaknesses. This one, for instance, has nothing on Og, king of Bashan, but is very helpful about the Amorites, of which Zihon was king. There are more than 700 entries by more than 250 scholars. (That's what the publisher says. We didn't count how many more.) In any event, a useful and reliable reference, well worth a place beside the others — leaving room, of course, for more to come.

THE BELIEVER AS CITIZEN: JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY IN A NEW CONTEXT. By THOMAS HUGHSON, S.J. *Paulist Press. 185 pp. $14.95 paper.*

An interesting effort to appropriate Murray—a Jesuit who had enormous influence on, among other things, Catholic thinking about religious freedom—for the academic left. Gadamer, Curran, Tracy, and the writers of bishops' letters figure prominently in this account. Aside from the turgid style, the book is weakened by a failure to engage alternative arguments and a total indifference to Catholic social teaching as represented by the present pontificate. But, even when the treatment is implausible, the more Murray's work is in play, the better for all of us.

A HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE MAJOR CATHOLIC WORKS OF CARDINAL NEWMAN. By JOHN R. GRIFFEN. *Peter Lang (New York). 204 pp. $39.95.*

The title is cumbersome and misleading, and the book costs much too much. Nevertheless, this is an engaging and comprehensive essay on Newman's main writings, with particular attention to his ecclesiology. It should be of interest to more than the Newman specialists who will likely take note.

THE CUTTING EDGE: HOW CHURCHES SPEAK ON SOCIAL ISSUES. By MARK ELLINGSEN. *Eerdmans. 370 pp. $34.99 paper.*

The author, a Lutheran scholar with wide ecumenical experience, deserves a medal for sheer perdurance in working through thousands of official statements and reports on everything under the sun, and maybe then some. The result is a valuable reference work recommended for institutional libraries.

THE BIBLE: DESIGNED TO BE READ AS LIVING LITERATURE. By ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES. *Simon & Schuster. 1,258 pp. $25.*

First issued in 1936, the "Bates Bible" has been updated by Lodowick Allison, but in a manner that leaves the magnificence of the King James language untouched. As an editor named Neuhaus says on the dust jacket: "Interest in the Bible is much more common than familiarity with the Bible. This remarkably accessible edition invites the interested to become familiar."

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY. Edited by JOHN P. LANGAN. *Georgetown University Press. 260 pp. $14.95 paper.*

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Cardinal John Henry Newman is perhaps the most compelling and influential figure in the English-speaking Church of the last hundred and fifty years. His name is associated with the emergence of the Catholic laity, the founding of Universities, extraordinary advances in philosophy and theology, the thought and spirit of Vatican II, and the challenges modernity presents to a life of faith. His life and spirit is perhaps best summarized in the Latin words he took for a personal motto: "cor ad cor loquitur" – "heart speaks to heart." Join Katherine Tillman as she explores the life of this extraordinary convert and his rich, compelling thought on problems of faith, reason, conscience, authority, and the central role of the lay Catholic. (Six lectures on videotape plus a copy of specially selected readings from Newman's Works.)

In 1985 Katherine Tillman received the Sheedy Award for teaching in Arts and Letters, and is perhaps the only faculty member at Notre Dame who has been named by students as both one of the Ten Most Popular and Ten Most Challenging professors.

WOMEN WRITERS: SPIRIT AND SOCIETY
PROFESSOR SONIA GERNES

North America has been blessed in this century with great women writers – Edith Wharton, Flannery O'Connor, Leslie Marmon Silko, Toni Morrison, Marilynne Robinson and Margaret Atwood to name a few. Yet in her teaching, Professor Gernes finds few students have been introduced to the keen pleasures and insights that these remarkable women have to offer us. In this course she takes up each author in turn, singling out the most important themes in her writing. Each talk will introduce you to stories and authors you will simply not be able to put off reading any longer. (Six lectures on video plus a copy of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, which was recently made into a major film.)

Sonia Gernes has been a member of the English Department at Notre Dame since 1975. A noted poet and novelist in her own right, her novel *The Way to St. Ives*, won an award from the American Library Association and one of her poetry collections, *Brief Lives*, was maned best poetry book of 1981 by the Society of Midland Authors.

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mean? These are the problems addressed by essays and responses on *Ex Corde Ecclesiae,* a 1990 apostolic constitution on Catholic higher education. Those responsible for church-related schools other than Catholic will also benefit from sitting in on this lively discussion.

FULL PEWS AND EMPTY ALTARS. By RICHARD A. SCHOENHERR and LAWRENCE A. YOUNG. *University of Wisconsin Press. 437 pp. $19.95 paper.*

An exhaustive demographic study of the Catholic priesthood, concluding that there will be a 40 percent decrease in the number of diocesan priests in the next decade. The sociologist authors are big on trends and extrapolations, and very short on cultural factors (not to mention the Holy Spirit). Of course they may turn out to be right, but one has to hope that those who claim to see a renewal in priestly vocations have a better fix on the future.

MODERN CATHOLICISM: VATICAN II AND AFTER. Edited by ADRIAN HASTINGS. *Oxford University Press. 473 pp. $35.*

A useful reference work twenty-five years after the Council. The tilt is left of center (is Peter Hebblethwaite really *the* authority on so many subjects?) and the contributors largely English, but the result is a summary of the conventional wisdom (in the not always pejorative sense of the term) about the state of Catholicism today.

STEP AHEAD OF DISASTER. By EUGENE VON TEUBER and BASIL ENTWISTLE. *Grosvenor Books (Salem, Oregon). 162 pp. $12.95 paper.*

A dramatic autobiographical account of an aristocratic Austrian family in what is now the Czech Republic, and how they survived both the Nazis and Communists. Central to the story is von Teuber's conversion to a more serious Catholicism under the influence of Frank Buchman. Foreword by Michael Novak.

FAITH AND ORDER: THE RECONCILIATION OF LAW AND RELIGION. By HAROLD J. BERMAN. *Scholars Press. 415 pp. $39.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.*

Few people in this century have done as much as Harold Berman, now at Emory University Law School, to illuminate the complicated connections between law and religion. The essays in this volume reflect the reach of his scholarship—from law in medieval England to church-state relations in America to Christianity and "democratization" in the former Soviet Union. It is safe to say that even those with only a general interest in "law and religion" will find here more than an essay or two that will open up new ways of thinking about the part religion has played, and continues to play, in creating and sustaining our cultural home.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN. By THOMAS L. BRODIE. *Oxford University Press. 623 pp. $55.*

Billed as "a literary and theological commentary," this solid piece of work can be warmly recommended to students of theology and preachers (and those who are both). Brodie effectively argues that the Fourth Gospel is a finely crafted whole that points toward Christ's mission to the Gentiles and the Church's mission to the world. 'Tis a shame that the price will limit its availability.

BEING CATHOLIC: *COMMONWEAL* FROM THE SEVENTIES TO THE NINETIES. By RODGER VAN ALLEN. *Loyola University Press. 203 pp. $12.95 paper.*

A celebration of the Catholic lay magazine upon its (almost) seventieth anniversary. *Commonweal* undoubtedly deserves to be celebrated for many reasons, but just a touch of critical analysis would have been more in keeping with the magazine itself.

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Richard John Neuhaus

In the Aftermath of Victory

Considering that for more than forty years there was no larger public concern than the concern about the threat of communism, one continues to be amazed at the insouciance with which most of us in the West have taken its demise. There were no parades, no dancing in the streets, few memorable speeches that marked the passing of a horror as great or greater than anything history has witnessed. People speak of the "end of the Cold War" in a casual and taken for granted way, as though it is almost a bother that now requires a change in policy, and nobody is quite sure how policy ought to be changed. There was something reassuring about the Cold War. It made sense of the geopolitical, even the moral, world. There were bad guys and good guys, wins (always ambiguous) and losses (much less ambiguous), and familiar arguments about things such as the morality of deterrence, the preparedness of NATO, and what all.

Of course the celebration of the end of a great evil was muted by the fact that many in the West, notably intellectuals, never did get around to acknowledging communism as a great evil. Remember the flood of ink expended in chiding Reagan when he called the Soviet Union an evil empire. Now almost everybody is ready to say, as though it was never a matter of dispute, that of course it was an empire and of course it was evil. That's obvious, it is said, by people who still condemn those bothersome anti-Communists who made such a fuss about it. In an interesting twist, the idea that the Soviet Union was evil, corrupt, and hopelessly incompetent has given birth to the idea that it collapsed of itself. Reagan, John Paul II, the West's military resolve, the long, bitter struggles of those who resisted their totalitarian masters—none of that really mattered. "It could never have lasted. It's surprising that it went on as long as it did," remarked a Princeton professor on a recent talk show. He who had for decades been telling us that Soviet Communism was "a fact of life" and we would have to learn to live with it, meaning we would have to accommodate it.

We speak of the "collapse" of the empire. As though a spring in the works finally broke, or a fuse blew. Admittedly, it was more collapse than conquest, but the thing did not fall of itself. There were persistent external pressures, and it is true to say that a victory was won. Chiefly by the people inside who resisted the tyrants but also, as those inside will be the first to tell you, by those outside who were steadfast and helped them to sustain hope that the night would sometime end. In that connection they mention most consistently John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher. Little wonder that so many in the West do not want to hear the story of the end of the empire as it is told by those who lived through it.

Even for those in the West who were in a mood to celebrate what they perceived as a victory, it seemed there was hardly time. As one evil collapsed, a hundred others emerged to take its place. Bosnia is but the word we use to refer to dozens of other bloody conflicts within the former empire. Western television, perhaps gauging its viewers' appetite for unpleasantness, focuses on one at a time. Far from being the end of history, it is the return of history for peoples who are only now free to speak and act on resentments and aspirations that were never forgotten. Václav Havel, the playwright who is president of the Czech Republic, observes: "It is truly astonishing to discover how, after decades of falsified history and ideological manipulation, nothing has been forgotten. Nations are now remembering their ancient achievements and their ancient suffering, their ancient suppressors and their allies, their ancient statehood and their former borders, their traditional animosities and affinities—in short, they are suddenly recalling a history that, until recently, had been carefully concealed or misrepresented."

The history that has been recalled seems to be beyond control. Europe and the U.S. failed in Bosnia. One says that without knowing what they might have

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done not to fail. They are not likely even to posture as the champions of peace and justice in the many other conflicts that have broken out or will break out. The magnitude of what has happened and of the tasks that lie ahead has little touched the imagination of most Americans. Havel writes: "The fall of the Communist empire is an event on the same scale of historical importance as the fall of the Roman empire. And it is having similar consequences, both good and extremely disturbing. It means a significant change in the countenance of today's world. The change is painful and will take a long time. To build a new world on the ruins of communism might be as extended and complex a process as the creation of a Christian Europe—after the great migration—once was."

Havel, who is equivocal about his own Christian commitment, is driven to—some might say he "escapes" to—reflections on the spiritual. "I see only one way out of this crisis: man must come to a new understanding of himself, of his limitations and his place in the world. He should grasp his responsibility in a new way, and reestablish a relationship with the things that transcend him. We must rehabilitate our sense of ourselves as active human subjects, and liberate ourselves from the captivity of a purely national perception of the world. Through this 'subjecthood' and the individual conscience that goes with it, we must discover a new relationship to our neighbors, and to the universe and its metaphysical order, which is the source of the moral order."

Havel and John Paul II read one another. The 1991 encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, is an ambitious argument premised upon the concepts of the "acting person" and the "subjectivity of society." In suppressing the human subject, communism suppressed the transcendent, and vice versa. "Realists" think such talk impossibly fuzzy, little more than another version of what the lady in the White House calls "the politics of meaning." But it is in fact uncomfortably concrete. It is not a certain system or set of policies or constellation of sociopolitical forces that need to change; you need to change, we need to change. Yes, some systems and policies no doubt need to be changed, but nothing will avail without the spiritual renewal of the acting subject of history, man. And "man" is all of us, one by one.

It is the great designs for changing structures and policies and social forces that are fuzzy, vague, and evil in consequence, no matter how noble in concept. Communism was the greatest, the most ambitious, the most comprehensive design that human beings ever attempted to impose by force. Its defeat is cause for celebration. And for renewed determination to attend to the particularities of persons and their communities. Utopias are postponed indefinitely. Being a good and decent person in community with others, and in accord with a moral order that is not of our designing, is task enough. And that is as true for the renewal of America as it is for those countries left in the ruins of the Soviet empire.

FT

Life and Death in "The Movement"

A speaker in search of a platform, a crusader in search of a cause, a leader in search of a following. Allard Lowenstein was all of that and, until the last decade of his life, he usually found what he was searching for. Born in 1929 and shot dead by a mad disciple in 1980, he seemed at times to be a one-man movement within the prolonged agitation that, beginning in the 1960s and lingering to this day, is called The Movement. At the University of North Carolina—an unlikely school for a rich and terribly bright Jewish kid from New York who could have gone to Harvard or Yale—Lowenstein distinguished himself in college politics, becoming the founding inspiration of the National Student Association and its crusade to enlist the students of the world on the side of democracy and against totalitarianism. In the early sixties he played a pivotal part in organizing the freedom rides in support of desegregating the South, and by 1965 he was in the forefront of protest against U.S. policies in Vietnam. Along the way, he adventurously tripped through South Africa and from that experience produced his only book, *Brutal Mandate*, an early and stirring call for Western opposition to apartheid.

Al Lowenstein is most remembered, to the extent that he is remembered at all, for initiating the "dump Johnson" movement that induced Senator Eugene McCarthy to challenge Lyndon Johnson for the Democratic nomination and resulted in Johnson's withdrawal of 1968. According to a new biography by William H. Chafe (*Never Stop Running: Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism*, Basic Books, 592 pp., $28), it was all downhill for Lowenstein after that. In fact, in Mr. Chafe's account—and he is none too sympathetic to his subject—the downhill slide began much earlier.

Working Within the System

Mr. Chafe gives us yet another exercise in a genre that is aptly described as pathobiography. Al Lowenstein was sick, sick, sick, and it is ironically appropriate that he was killed by someone only a little sicker than himself. Chafe does not put it quite that starkly, but that is the gist of his story. Lowenstein was sick, according to the author, not because he was a radical

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but because he was not radical enough. That is the significance of the subtitle: Lowenstein destroyed himself in "the struggle to save American liberalism," and American liberalism cannot be saved. From his early student years until he died, Al Lowenstein urged young people to work for change "within the system." As Chafe notes, back in the sixties that was *the* big question: whether the system was reformable, as liberals said, or whether authentic radicals had to go outside the system in order to overthrow it. Lowenstein was a liberal. Chafe leaves no doubt that he was and he is a radical, and apparently that is not at all compromised by his being a tenured professor of history at Duke University. Indeed, what more strategically useful—or more comfortable—perch could there be from which to heap radical scorn on those deluded souls who, like Lowenstein, think liberal democracy can be saved, or is worth saving?

Above all, Chafe will not forgive Lowenstein for his anticommunism. From early on, Al Lowenstein was clear-eyed about the totalitarian threat. It was one of the factors that made him William F. Buckley's favorite interlocutor on the left. (To the consternation of his admirers, Buckley endorsed Lowenstein for Congress.) For Chafe, anticommunism was Lowenstein's unpardonable sin. Not that he doesn't have a lot of other problems with Lowenstein. As is the way with pathobiographies, the book delves into a putatively tortured childhood. As a conscientious do-gooder, Lowenstein felt guilty about coming from a rich family. More poignantly, he was embarrassed about his Jewishness and spent almost his entire life trying to pass himself off as a WASP. From the sources cited, it does seem that Lowenstein had a stepmother who makes the stereotypically smothering Jewish mother seem like an understatement. And there is no doubt that Lowenstein had a passion, perhaps an inordinate passion, to be accepted, to be liked. But on these scores and others, Chafe does his best, which is to say his worst, to turn problems into pathologies (e.g., "Lowenstein thrived by feeding on people").

Never Stop Running, one regrets to say, is laced with nastiness. Particularly nasty and confused is its treatment of Lowenstein's alleged homosexuality. There is a diary entry by the youthful Lowenstein indicating that he was sexually attracted to boys, and was worried about it. Nothing especially unusual about that. The big item is that, when he was on speaking tours and traveling with a male assistant, Lowenstein would arrange for them to stay in motel rooms with one bed. After years of assiduous research, the journalistic equivalent of sniffing bedsheets, Chafe never establishes that anything happened in those beds beyond friendly embraces and the comfort of human company. That he does not establish the point is certainly not for lack of trying. On the basis of this book, however, there is no reason to believe that Lowenstein—who was married and had several children—was "gay" in the current meaning of the term. He may have been often lonely and innerly conflicted about his sexuality, but there is no warrant for the book's obsession with Lowentein's homosexuality.

The author's obsession with homosexuality is, in addition to being distasteful, deeply confused. Most of the time, the theme of homosexuality seems to be pursued as part and parcel of the author's indictment of his subject. The implication is that in this respect, too, Lowenstein was a hypocrite, incapable of honesty about himself and the positions that he advanced. But then, toward the end, Chafe suggests that, if Lowenstein had lived longer or had had the nerve for it, he might have again found the new crusade that he needed in the gay liberation movement—a movement that is apparently in continuity with Chafe's understanding of being authentically radical. In this way, the reader is invited to believe, Lowenstein might have, at least partially, redeemed the life of which he had made such a shambles.

Paradigm and Friend

Why are we giving so much space to this book, especially when most readers may never have heard of Allard Lowenstein? In part, because Lowenstein was a paradigmatic figure for one stream of The Movement, and his life helps us to understand the consequences of that convulsion, which continues to the present. In part, because Al Lowenstein was a friend. We crossed paths occasionally in the sixties and got to know one another better in the early seventies. This writer, in a fit of vocational absentmindedness, ran for Congress in 1970 and, thank God, lost. In 1972 Al, who had been gerrymandered out of his Congressional district on Long Island, wanted to run from the same Brooklyn district, and we backed him (in preference to the indomitable Bella Abzug who had an interest in the district). Al, too, lost and then went on to run unsuccessfully from another district, and then another, until some of his friends became embarrassed for him.

Never Stop Running is a fine title. Especially after 1972, Al's life assumed a hectic, fevered, erratic character. In the last years his marriage fell apart, he seemed incapable of staying with one thing for long, and at the time of his death in 1980 was doing flack work on behalf of Senator Edward Kennedy's presidential bid. We saw one another from time to time, mainly talking about the nature of the political and why one must not let it become an idol that consumes the entirety of life. At least that is what this writer talked about, and Al seemed at times to be about half convinced. That, in our judgment, was Al's problem. His problem was that he believed—as William Chafe makes clear that he believes—that "the personal is the political and the political is the

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personal." It is a deadly formula. Al at times appeared to be open to the possibility that the formula was wrong, but he seemed to be unable to stop believing it, or at least to stop living as though it were true.

For Al (and many others), politics was movement—the student movement, the civil rights movement, finally the all-encompassing The Movement. He was extraordinarily good at what he did in the fifties and sixties. He was charismatic before the term became trivialized. Thousands of now middle-aged Americans can undoubtedly remember the time when, as students, they were carried along by Al's exhilarating confidence that they really could make a difference, that they could change the world. Many of them, one suspects, will resent Mr. Chafe's denigration of their hero. Life is not ordinarily graced with very many heroes, and it is understandable that people would want to hold on to the way they remember Allard Lowenstein.

The Center that Did Not Hold

But Chafe is right about things falling apart for Al in the last decade of his life. His center was The Movement, and the movement did not hold. By 1968—as exemplified by the riotous Democratic Convention in Chicago—The Movement had fragmented into discordant factions, and there was no putting the pieces back together into anything like a coherent version of radical or liberal. In his authorial "struggle to save American radicalism," Chafe indicts Lowenstein for selling out The Movement. Al's problem, however, was that he was all too faithful to a movement that had died. He continued to dance long after the party was over and the lights had been turned out. Because he was a liberal and not a radical, because he insisted upon working within the system, he could not become a public buffoon like the late Abby Hoffman, nor could he accept a tenured position at a prestige university in order to tell stories to the next generation about the revolution that was betrayed.

Al was a liberal. He talked on and on about those who had been his heroes and his friends, about Eleanor Roosevelt, Norman Thomas, Martin Luther King. In his last years, it seemed to many that he was talking about the olden days, but for Al they were all today, and would be tomorrow. He was wrong about that. Along the way, however, he made an astonishing number of friends. Maybe, as Chafe charges, he was feeding on people, but they were also feeding on him. Put more kindly, and more accurately, they nourished one another. There is something splendid in that, even if they sometimes also nourished illusions about what politics can be.

William Buckley, along with Edward Kennedy, spoke at the funeral at Central Synagogue in Manhattan. "How did he live such a life," Buckley asked, "so hectic with public concern, while preoccupying himself so fully with the individual human being? His rhythms were not of this world. His days, foreshortened, lived out the secular dissonances. . . . Who was it who said that Nature abhors a vacuum? Let Nature then fill this vacuum. That is the challenge which, bereft, the friends of Allard Lowenstein hurl up to Nature and Nature's God, prayerfully, demandingly, because today, Lord, our loneliness is great." That is the way many of us will go on thinking about Al Lowenstein, Mr. Chafe's efforts notwithstanding.

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WHY *CUPIDITAS* GETS THE EXCITING LINES

Lust is exciting. Although it is forbidden, perhaps because it is forbidden, lust is the enticing indulgence of deepest desire. Love, on the other hand, is in the Christian reading of things the right ordering of desire. It is desire tempered by duty, and duty is something of a bore. That is a conventional interpretation of the difference between *cupiditas* (lust) and *caritas* (love). According to William S. Babcock of Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, it is a wrong interpretation. It is the reason why, in thinking about life's story, *cupiditas* gets so many of the exciting, passionate lines while *caritas* bespeaks the better but less interesting side of ourselves.

The Christian understanding of love and loves has been powerfully influenced by Saint Augustine, and Babcock contends that most of us have been getting Augustine wrong. His is one of several engaging and instructive essays in a new book, *Augustine Today*, published by Eerdmans ($12.99), and emerging from a conference sponsored by our institute. (Other essays are by Ernest Fortin of Boston College, Robert J. O'Connell of Fordham, and Eugene TeSelle of Vanderbilt. The book includes an extensive "Story of an Encounter"—an account of what the essayists and twenty other scholars actually said during two days of intensive exchange—written by John Muether.) Here is a taste of Babcock's argument, an argument that we find entirely persuasive.

"Augustine does not use *cupiditas* and *caritas* to distinguish lust from love; he uses them to distinguish two loves. Both count as *amor*. The point is critical if we are to understand Augustine properly. *Cupiditas* is not a yielding to blind lust. It is human love seeking fulfillment—happiness—in a sphere that does not and cannot provide fulfillment, the sphere of mortal and transitory things. Since these things are

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subject to loss, they leave us vulnerable to loss and our love for them unavoidably tinged with fear. The social consequence . . . is that person is set against person, each perceiving the other as a threat to self; and the personal consequence is a demeaning of the self. Augustine's *cupiditas* is not mere lust. It is a rendering of the hopeless fragility and desperate outcome (both for self and for society) of love's search for fulfillment where fulfillment cannot be found. Certainly this love is flawed, morally, as 'the root of all evil'; but it is to be understood, all the same, as nothing less than love: love loving the wrong thing and thus love entangled in the web of unhappiness that it has spun for itself.

"*Caritas*, too, is a rendering of love, a love no less intensely passionate than *cupiditas*. In this case, of course, love seeks fulfillment where it can be found. Its object is not subject to loss; and its love, therefore, is untouched by fear. What is distinctively human—the soul with its capacities to think, to reason, to know—is not demeaned, but brought out of its emotive subjection to lesser things and realized in its full value: knowing is the mode in which this love attains it object. And this love does not set person against person, but rather joins person with person in the common bond of shared love for a shared object. Thus *caritas* is distinguished from *cupiditas* as love fulfilled from love unfulfilled, not by any diminishment of passion or of pleasure. In fact, just because *caritas* is love seeking and attaining the object that does afford human happiness, it would be more than strange if it lacked all intensity in its seeking and all pleasure in its attainment.

"If we do not see, then, that Augustine converted the question of happiness into a question of two loves—two loves differentiated, not first in the lover, but first by the loved—we are in danger of misconstruing what he meant both by *cupiditas* and by *caritas*, and we are in danger, too, of misconstruing the cultural and theological tradition within which we still largely, if often unwittingly, delineate our own notions of human love and human happiness, for that tradition was decisively shaped by Augustine and the Augustinian view of love."

Augustine Today is edited by your scribe, and he is confident that you will not regret giving it careful attention.

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Coming in the February 1994 "Public Square" . . .

Richard John Neuhaus considers the violent methods of some pro-life activists in "Bloody-Minded Compassion"

A LOGIC EXTENDED

Jenny Teichman takes Peter Singer to task in the pages of *The New Criterion*, and Mr. Singer certainly invites being taken to task. He is an Australian who has popularized the notion of "speciesism"—meaning the moral judgment that human beings count more than, say, piglets or puppies. In Germany, Mr. Singer has been disinvited from conferences and prevented from speaking on several occasions. He has complained about this at length in the *New York Review of Books* and elsewhere. It has become a minor *cause célèbre* for people who take it to be an issue of academic freedom. But it seems the Germans think they have heard Mr. Singer's doctrines before, and they led to most unfortunate consequences.

Ms. Teichman abhors Singer's condoning of infanticide and euthanasia, along with his general program of "deprivileging" the human species. She thinks the best term for Singer and his like is "personist." By that she means this: "Note that in ordinary life the word 'person' is strongly humanistic. Outside philosophy and religion its meaning is governed by the fact that its extension is in practice the same as the extension of the term 'human being.' In other words, in ordinary life 'person' and 'human being' refer to the same things. For this reason the *ordinary* sense of the word 'person' does not, indeed cannot, detach moral import from the concept of the human. The case is otherwise with the Singerian view of personhood, because when Singer draws his distinction between human beings and persons he carefully detaches moral import from his idea of the human and transfers it to his idea of the person." In the ethics of Peter Singer, Teichman writes, "person" is an honorific term.

One can agree with Teichman's criticism of Singer wholeheartedly while still raising a problem or two. We hope that "personist" does not find currency, since it is easily confused with "personalist," a philosophy associated with some of the greatest champions of the sanctity of human life, notably by Pope John Paul II. Second, we very much wish Ms. Teichman were right in suggesting that there is something novel in the separation of "person" from the human. That separation, far from originating with Peter Singer, is the very key to the argument for the abortion liberty in, for instance, *Roe v. Wade* and subsequent Supreme Court decisions. Singer and those of like mind simply extend the logic of *Roe* somewhat further. But they are faithful to the logic. As fine as Ms. Teichman's article is, one is always a little surprised when very sensible people discuss these questions in a manner that ignores the reality and rationale of abortion.

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Pop Culture and Tyranny

"Unless we improve the tone and quality of our own democratic culture, we may end up helping the nations of Central and Eastern Europe move from tyranny to decadence with no redeeming interval in between." That is Ervin Duggan, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, giving some good answers to good questions asked in an interview with the Institute on Religion and Democracy. Can't the government clamp down on some of the smuttiest smut being broadcast? Duggan responds: "I believe that government should have laws against obscenity, although it seems difficult to find a jury these days that's willing to judge anything obscene. And I support the Federal Communications Commission's enforcement standard that levies occasional fines on broadcast indecency. But we need to realize that when the general level of taste and morality breaks down in the society, government is hardly the agency to cure the problem. The police are occasionally called to quell family disputes and break up marital squabbles, but we don't think of the police as marriage counselors or the source of the values that inform family life. The problem is more a problem of ethics and morals than of law."

Is censorship today a real threat to American freedom? Duggan: "I suspect that the level of censorious sentiment is lower today that ever before, and that the strength of would-be censors less than ever. A useful question to ask, I think, is, 'What is the real wolf at our door?' In today's popular culture, it seems to me that the real wolf at the door is not censorship; a look at Phil Donahue or Oprah is proof that uninhibited free speech is alive and kicking in this country. The real wolves at the door today, in my judgment, are a pornographic concept of sex that robs adults of romance and children of innocence; a pornographic approach to violence that relishes gore and may even promote violent behavior—and finally, a general, in-your-face tastelessness that coarsens social life and robs it of beauty, civility, and elegance. But again, the answer is not the blunt instrument of censorship; it's a positive effort to promote what is good and true and beautiful."

Isn't positive change really up to parents? Says Duggan: "I'm not about to blame parents, who are beleagured and without much help. A generation ago parents could depend on the popular culture to support and reinforce their moral values. Now they can't. A generation ago, parents (typically the mother) had more choice about whether they would work outside or inside the home. Now they don't; many who would like to be at home when their kids come home from school can't afford to be. A generation ago, I suspect, more families lived closer to grandparents and relatives than they do now. So children are unconnected, turned loose, exposed to a relentless and invasive televised onslaught—and parents are told, by the very people who are concocting the swill, that they need to exercise more 'control.' To tell parents that parental 'control' is the only answer is unimaginative—like saying that gas masks are the only answer to air pollution, or that bulletproof vests are the only answer to drive-by shootings."

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Saving Marriages

It may seem only a few years ago that "open marriages," "spouse swapping," and "no-fault divorce" were touted as marks of liberation and progress. In fact, those ideas and the behaviors they spawned have been with us for three decades and the returns are now in. The consequences are disastrous, especially for children and women. The proverbial pendulum is now arching its way toward the commonsensical truths that children need stable, two-parent families, and women deserve protection from the predatory ways of too many men. These truths are receiving increasing attention in the academic literature, but the change among scholars is still hesitant and much disputed, since intellectuals have a vested interest in perpetually complexifying the obvious.

Not so with syndicated columnist and committed Christian Michael J. McManus. He goes directly to the heart of things in *Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and Family Stay Married* (Zondervan, $15.99 cloth, $9.99 paper). McManus presents persuasive evidence that 80 percent or more of even the most troubled marriages can be saved—and he gives very specific steps (steps actually used in the churches and families he describes) toward that end. The author is strongly and rightly critical of churches that bless unions without accepting responsibility for what happens before and after the wedding. Himself a Protestant, McManus suggests that Protestant churches that have turned themselves into "wedding factories" have a lot to learn from the marriage preparation and renewal programs sponsored by the Catholic Church.

While his main attention is on the local church and the family, McManus recognizes that divorce, abandonment, and the pervasive weakening of familial bonds constitute a public crisis that requires a rethinking of relevant public policies. He notes that present law permits a man to abandon his wife and family, run off with a secretary, force the sale of a family home so he can get half of its value, and then avoid alimony and even child support. McManus

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comes up with an idea that will undoubtedly meet opposition but is worth thinking about. Perhaps couples should be allowed to choose either a "Marriage of Compatibility" or a "Marriage of Commitment." In the latter, neither can divorce unless one party can prove that the other party broke the marital covenant by adultery or desertion. He further proposes that women divorced after long-term marriages deserve alimony until they die or remarry. California took this approach, and the number of divorces is dropping. McManus also asks us to think about the wisdom of having the IRS collect child support, much in the way that that agency now collects taxes.

It is not chiefly for its public policy proposals, however, that *Marriage Savers* is a book for our time. It is its unblinking account of what is happening to marriages and families and its straightforwardly practical remedies that make this book such a compelling call for churches and couples to get serious about the solemn and sacred adventure that is marriage. Those who just want a wedding without preparing themselves for the commitments of marriage—priests, pastors, and rabbis should have the confidence and honesty to say—can always go to the Justice of the Peace. Where there is such confidence and honesty on the part of clergy, McManus contends, the impact on marriage and divorce is dramatic.

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SUBVERSIVE CONSERVATISM

Those critics are right who say that conservatism was for several decades held together by opposition to communism. Mark C. Henrie, a Harvard graduate student of political theory and valued contributor to this journal, does not hesitate to admit it. He writes in *The Intercollegiate Review*: "If, as Carl Schmitt once argued, politics is a matter of finding enemies, then the conservatives were particularly astute at seeing the real enemy of our time, while liberals, blinded ideologically to enemies on the left, simply 'missed' the major threat to peace, public liberty, and private virtue in the second half of this century." That is a lot to miss, but, of course, communism is no longer a politically available enemy. Communism, Henrie joins others in suggesting, was but one form—albeit an awesomely bloody form—of the real enemy.

The real enemy since the French Revolution has been a particular doctrine and practice regarding the *sovereignty* of the state. The threat that conservatives resist is posed by the centralized and "rationalized" state that claims a monopoly on the "legitimate" use of coercion, "a claim which expanded imperceptibly to a tacitly presumed monopoly of social authority, *tout court*." This all-encompassing notion of sovereignty can take both authoritarian and democratic forms; it is sometimes viewed as leftist, sometimes as rightist. Henrie joins Robert Nisbet (*Conservatism: Dream and Reality*) in arguing that, while it sounds impossibly paradoxical to many Americans, "the power of the state in our lives has risen hand in hand with the rise of the individual 'rights' about which we are so proud." Increasing state power and increasing individual "freedom" can work together quite nicely. That is because the rights that are "recognized" by the modern liberal state are not so much rights against the state as they are rights against other communities that used to have a measure of social authority. Marriage, family, church, for examples.

Conservatives are right to contend against "big government," says Henrie, but they frequently do so in a way that inadvertently increases the sway of government. Come again? Here is how Henrie explains it: "What American conservatives largely have failed to see is that the advance of the negative liberties and the protection of a 'private' realm have often operated not to the advantage of real liberty, but rather to the advantage of the state's monopoly on 'coercion,' which now is the only meaning of 'authority' once all alternatives have been delegitimized. The implications of this analysis are plain: the natural rights of the social contract tradition, to which American conservatives have often repaired in their attempt to limit the gigantism of the state, ultimately serve to strengthen the hand of the liberal state. Thus, a conservatism that celebrates individual liberties only accelerates liberal totalism. We have most clearly experienced this emerging totalism in the oft-heard lament that 'everything is becoming politics,' from education to morality to relations between the sexes. Such politicization is an inevitable result of the manner in which American liberalism conceives of the 'public-private' distinction. That is, in protecting only a certain understanding of privacy, and doing so by advancing a doctrine of politically administered individual rights, a uniform politicization of all spheres of human interest occurs. Thus, all human relations begin to resemble the relations of the political sphere, and these relations in turn are modelled on the contracts of the marketplace, for significantly, the preeminent Lockean rights are the rights of private property and economic freedom."

Henrie urges conservatives to be the reforming party by accenting authentic diversity and pluralism in society. This against the ersatz diversity of the current champions of "diversity" and "inclusivity" who employ the power of the state to eliminate the differences that really make a difference. The

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constitutionally protected freedom of association, Henrie suggests, is a communal right (he does not use the term) that has been much neglected. In the university and other institutions, the need is to create and protect space for diversity. Groups that are "equally open" to everyone cannot, by definition, be distinctive. They must be the same as every other group, they must fit into the homogenizing dynamics of "liberal totalism." "Human goods such as community, solidarity, and indeed, even eccentricity, which are threatened in the process of homogenization, are what conservatives ultimately must be about 'conserving,'" says Henrie.

It is, as we say, a bracing article. Even if Henrie's sympathy for the Southern Agrarians—"perhaps the most genuine conservatives America has yet produced"—leads him to indulge in a little capitalist-bashing and fear that free trade between nations will lead to exporting the less attractive features of American liberalism. (Many leftists might agree with Henrie on the last point, although they speak in terms of American "imperialism.") A further weakness in the argument is the failure to explain that the apotheosis of the sovereignty of the state can only be countered by the claims of another, and higher, sovereignty. Henrie writes: "Yet only if our families, churches, and other associations *mean* something to us, indeed become *part of* us, will a defense of them in public policy be plausible. Living 'conservatively'—living generously within our concrete contexts—always has priority over any political or ideological project."

What these associations "mean" to us is important, but the proponents of the kind of liberal totalism criticized by Henrie readily respond that these are our private and individual feelings (although private and individual feelings about public and communal realities), and they must not be permitted to get in the way of public (meaning state) purposes. The pretensions and power of the state can only be checked by the public assertion of a rival and superior sovereignty. Henrie clearly understands that the assertion of the Sovereign Self does not check, but ends up by abetting, the expansionist state. Only religion, it seems, has the public purchase and a coherent conceptual claim that can challenge the state. That claim is the sovereignty of God—as in "one nation under God." The respect demanded for the resulting communities—whether the Church or an elect people bound by Torah—is not a demand made simply by individuals to whom these communities "mean" a great deal. These are not communities formed by individuals exercising their associational rights, but communities constituted by Sovereign Authority. These are not communities of our creation, indeed they are not *ours* at all. They were there before us and they will be there after us. We are simply called to obedience to the truth by which they are constituted.

Because he is a serious Catholic, we doubt that Henrie disagrees with this addendum to his fine article. But it is a necessary addendum. Without it, assertions of associational freedom—whether such assertions be called conservative or something else—have no firm place to stand, socially or conceptually. Associational freedom that is premised upon individual rights serves the doctrine of the sovereign self, which inevitably ends up serving the ambitions of the sovereign state to control both the individual and his associations. To be sure, some will protest that sovereignty means sovereignty; that if sovereignty is divided, or checked by another sovereignty, it is not sovereignty at all. If that all-or-nothing definition of sovereignty is the only one available to us, then we have no choice but to say that the state is not sovereign.

Every time Christians say "Christ is Lord," they are saying that the state is not sovereign. Not finally. And, if "not finally sovereign" means not sovereign at all, then the state is not sovereign at all. In fact, however, we can, with the founders of this constitutional order, understand sovereignty in a more limited sense. Politically and legally, decisions about the modest tasks assigned to the state are made by its rules. The decision that this is the way things should be is, at least in theory, made by the sovereignty of "We the People." And, at least in this society, most people acknowledge a sovereignty above themselves, and certainly above their own creature, the state. Admittedly, this understanding of sovereignty has fallen upon hard times in our courts and legislatures. The dynamics of state power today work hand in hand with inflated claims of individual rights to break out of any limits imposed upon the state's claim to sovereignty. This is a particular way, a very American way, taken by a universal temptation of power. The temptation, of course, is to aspire to being God. The consequent idolatry can only be subverted by those who know that God is God, and who have the courage and ability to effectively assert that truth in public. And even then the idolatry may prevail, for a time.

FT

PUBLISHING FOLLIES

Those of a certain age will remember when numerous books of religious and theological significance bore the imprint of Harper & Row. What is now HarperCollins (San Francisco) is something else. For at least a couple of years, it seems, its thick catalogue offers little but the detritus of spiritual and cultural decay. The current catalogue has just come

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across our desk. It is chock full of New Age, fatuously bouncy self-help, the unvarnished egoism of self-esteem, the occult, radical feminist ravings, gay advocacy whinings, and related effluents of ruined souls. Then there is a new book by John Shelby Spong, the Episcopalian bad boy who has previously published his discoveries that sexual sins are fun and that the Virgin Mary was . . . well, no need to get into that.

In more curmudgeonly moments we refer to him as Bishop Sponge, so uncritically does he soak up whatever comes down the toxic cultural stream. The new book is *Resurrection: Myth or Reality? A Bishop Rethinks the Origins of Christianity*. Being familiar with the bishop's earlier "rethinkings," one may reasonably predict that his answer to the subtitle's question is that the resurrection is a myth, but it is a very meaningful myth and is therefore filled with reality. Or something like that. Perhaps we are wrong. We hope so. But the bishop's efforts to date do not instill confidence. The description of the new book says that it aims "to make Christianity relevant and credible to today's spiritual seekers." Yes, people still say things like that, at least at HarperCollins.

The reality that struck us while examining the current catalogue is that Spong's is probably the most theologically weighty new book on offer. Compared with the others advertised, John Shelby Spong looks like a veritable Karl Barth or Hans Urs von Balthasar. Our business manager will likely be unhappy with this item. "Why should we advertise in a journal that attacks us?" That was the question put to him by another publisher about whose activities we were not entirely flattering. Don't worry, Rich. At HarperCollins they probably never heard of Barth or von Balthasar and they may well take the whole thing as a compliment.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ In her generally persuasive tome, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Harvard University Press), Liah Greenfeld examines the history of five nations that have been and are nations in quite different ways—England, France, Russia, Germany, and America. In almost 500 pages, Greenfeld throws out many enticing asides, including this one: "It would be a strong statement, but no overstatement, to say that the world in which we live was brought into being by vanity. The role of vanity—or desire for status—in social transformation has been largely underestimated, and greed or will to power are commonly regarded as its mainsprings. In all the five cases in this book, however, the emergence of nationalism was related to preoccupation with status. The English aristocracy sought to justify it; the French and the Russian nobility—to protect it; the German intellectuals—to achieve it. Even for the materialistic Americans, taxation without representation was an insult to their pride more than an injury to their economic interests. They fought—and became a nation—over respect due to them, rather than anything else." In a time when nationalism is demonstrating a new vibrancy—sometimes vicious and sometimes benign—Greenfeld is required reading. She is determinedly realistic about what drives men to action while not indulging in cheap debunking of the ideas and ideals that they profess.

■ In discussions of religion and society, "cultural accommodation" is usually thought to be a very dubious way to go. Not for Albert Borgmann, the author of *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*, now out from the University of Chicago Press. He concludes that the Episcopal cathedral in New York, St. John the Divine, is the very model of where we ought to be going. As the cathedral's dean, James Morton, is fond of saying, the Church's mission is to host and nurture the "carnival" of contemporary culture. Borgmann writes: "Some Christians may feel misunderstood when their endeavors are assimilated to social justice and their sanctuaries to the cultural heritage. The renewal of Roman Catholicism in this country, at any rate, depends on whether it comes to terms with democratic equality and contemporary culture. This is what the postmodern spirit, the holy spirit, calls us to do." Mr. Borgmann's zealotry for the Zeitgeist apparently knows no bounds. It is a zealotry widely shared but usually not so bluntly stated. In Paul Moore, the former New York bishop, the author descries "the embodiment of what this country can be, a person of Brahmin features and heritage who became a spokesman for the poor and powerless, who opened the Church to them, and who embraced the women, the minorities, the homosexuals." Setting aside the question of whom Bishop Moore may have embraced, Borgmann is undoubtedly right in saying that he and St. John the Divine represent what this country could become, perhaps is becoming, in obedience to the "holy spirit" of this moment in our cultural convulsions.

■ "What is this liberation theology that people are always talking about?" writes a reader. We try not to take too much for granted, but really. For those who need to know, however, we can recommend Robert McAfee Brown, an apologist for liberationism who has written, or so it seems, a dozen primers on the subject. He has a new one out from Westminster/John Knox Press, *Liberation Theology: An Introductory Guide*. In it he republishes a table from one of his earlier books and, while it is obviously a

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caricature of the "dominant" theology that some of us call orthodoxy, it usefully conveys the self-understanding of those engaged in the liberation theology project. A project, by the way, that has had hard slogging since history's debunking of the "Marxist analysis" with which it is usually associated.

Dominant Theology	Liberation Theology
1. responds to the *nonbeliever* whose faith is threatened by modernity	1. responds to the *nonperson* whose faith is threatened by forces of destruction
2. begins with the world of modernity and remains thought-oriented	2. begins with the world of oppression and becomes action-oriented
3. is developed "from above"—from the position of the privileged, the affluent, the bourgeois	3. is developed "from below"—from the "underside of history," the position of the oppressed, the marginated, the exploited
4. largely written by "those with white hands," the "winners"	4. only beginning to be written, must be articulated by those with dark-skinned, gnarled hands, the "losers"
5. focuses attention on a "religious" world that needs to be reinforced	5. focuses attention on a political world that needs to be replaced
6. linked to Western culture, the white race, the male sex, the bourgeois class	6. linked to "the wretched of the earth," the marginated races, despised cultures and sex, the exploited classes
7. affirms the achievements of culture—individualism, rationalism, capitalism, the bourgeois spirit	7. insists that the "achievements" of culture have been used to exploit the poor
8. wants to work gradually, reforming existing structures by "supervision"	8. demands to work rapidly through liberation from existing structures by "subversion"

And that, dear reader, is liberation theology—or at least Robert McAfee Brown's construal of it.

■ It was at a conference of patristic scholars and the subject turned to current agitations about gay and lesbian rights and the views of the early church fathers on homosexuality. David Wright, then at the Center for Theological Inquiry in Princeton, contributed this illuminating passage from the sayings of the desert monks. It seems that Satan had come to tempt a monk and knocked on the door of his cell. A comely boy answered the door, and Satan said, "Ah, since you are here there is no need for me."

■ Although confined to a wheelchair, Bill Bolte, president of Barrier Busters, is a very active proponent of the rights of the handicapped. He had this to say in *USA Today*: "The craziest thing I ever heard is that suicide is the newest right, as though the Founding Fathers made a mistake by not putting it in the Bill of Rights or FDR slipped up by not making it one of the four freedoms. Choice is becoming a code word for the powerful eliminating the powerless. It is their choice to make their lives more comfortable by making the lives of others end or become so unlivable that they are easily persuaded to accept the final act of charity (short though it is) of being killed."

■ *The Moral Sense* by James Q. Wilson (Free Press) is an important book and has received major attention in these pages. Sociologist Alan Wolfe of Boston University reviews it in *The New Republic*, noting that Wilson places a heavy emphasis on the importance of bonding between mother and child. Wolfe isn't buying. He writes, "The concept of bonding as it has evolved among scientists has dropped the mother as the necessary adhesive to her own infant. There may be general agreement that bonding is a good thing. There is no general agreement that bonding between a specific mother and a specific child is the only way to achieve it." Uh huh. Wolfe thinks social scientist Wilson relies too much on science. "It is a shame that, in this book, he ventures far from his expertise, in search of a certainty that, he believes, science can provide. Yet moral certainty is not, and must not be, the same thing as scientific certainty. All the sciences, physical and social, can tell us much about the world, but none of them can tell us the proper way to live in it." As we read *The Moral Sense*, Wilson is not after certainty. He does think that there is powerful evidence for the existence of something like "human nature"; he does conclude that human nature is endowed with certain moral "dispositions"; and he does suggest that we can derive some clues about the oughtness of things from the isness of things. The substance of Mr. Wolfe's review is that he seems to disagree on all these scores. The simple assertion of disagreement does not do much to advance the discussion.

■ Stupid us. In the November issue we quoted some fine words by Father Zen Er-jwun on Christian martyrdom. We referred to him as Father Er-jwun when, of course, Zen is the family name. While his friends may call him Father Er-jwun, we've never met the man, and so apologize.

■ From Wheaton College, Alan Jacobs writes in with this prediction: "When you think about all the people who are devoting their lives to sundry Adult Children groups, meditating on all the wrongs that their parents did them, one must wonder what is happening to *their* children. How much time can they give to child rearing when they can't stop talking and thinking about their own 'codependency'? It is reasonable to think that thirty years from now there will be only one such group: Adult Children of Adult Children."

■ As noted earlier, the oldline churches in Canada, led by the United Church of Canada, strongly opposed the idea that "single-faith" enterprises should be given broadcasting licenses. They feared "an invasion by American televangelists," and maybe

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not without reason. But now the greatly expanded number of channels has prompted the government to allow such licensing. The pervasive Canadian anxiety about American influence is evident in the new regulations that prescribe a heavy "Canadian content." The "ecumenical" double-faith and multi-faith broadcasters are nervously monitoring the impact of the new rules that threaten to facilitate the free exercise of religion for folk with only one religion.

■ The *New York Law Journal* carries an extensive article on a study commissioned by the New York Bar Association. It is titled, "Gay Lawyers Report on Workplace Bias." The gist of the report is that, wouldn't you know it, there is a lot of bias. The interesting thing is that the gay and lesbian movement has regularly denied that its goal is to get affirmative action and quotas for homosexuals. Yet in this study the way is prepared for exactly those measures. Questions asked include, "Are you aware of any effort on your employer's part to actively recruit gays and lesbians?" "Has your workplace adopted express goals and timetables for hiring and promoting gays and lesbians?" Since these and similar questions were overwhelmingly answered in the negative, the report concludes that the legal profession in New York is riddled with "bias." So much for the claim that gay activists simply want to be "accepted" and "treated like everyone else."

■ Despite two decades of the legalization of abortion on demand, the "procedure" has not been securely normalized within the American medical profession. Project Choice, a Texas organization, sent a questionnaire to 961 abortionists in January 1993, and here are the results. Sixty-nine percent say they are not respected in the medical community. Sixty-five percent feel ostracized because they perform abortions. Almost one in five have been denied hospital privileges. Almost half have had problems recruiting or keeping nurses or other staff because they perform abortions. Sixty-four percent say that performing abortions causes a negative impact on the non-abortion part of their practice. Almost 80 percent say that pro-choice organizations and politicians are not doing enough to support them. Thirty-eight percent express moral misgivings about the abortion procedure. Eighty-seven percent say they have been the victims of anti-abortion harassment or violence.

■ Many question whether the Jewish-Christian dialogue has any purpose, or at least any good purpose. The detractors of the dialogue, says Eugene Fisher of the U.S. Catholic Conference, are both Jewish and Christian and what they have in common is at least this: (1) they have almost no practical experience with the dialogue; (2) they have a social or political agenda that they think the dialogue should serve. "But dialogue, properly understood, cannot be a means to any end beyond itself," writes Fisher. "For, by definition, it is ordered to the deepening of the relationship of meaning, trust, and understanding between the parties in dialogue." Rabbi Leon Klenicki of the Anti-Defamation League, responding to Fisher, quotes the words of Will Herberg, words as striking today as when they were written forty years ago. Herberg, we hope it will be remembered, was the author of *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* and personally exemplified Jewish dialogue with Christianity, including engagement with such notable figures as Reinhold Niebuhr. He wrote: "Yes, each needs the other: Judaism needs Christianity and Christianity needs Judaism. The vocation of both can be defined in common terms: to bear witness to the living God amidst the idolatries of the world. But, since the emergence of the Church, and through the emergence of the Church, this vocation has, as it were, been split in two parts. The Jew fulfills his vocation by 'staying with God,' 'giving the world no rest so long as the world has not God'—to recall Jacques Maritain's unforgettable phrase. The Christian can fulfill his vocation only by 'going out' to conquer the world for God. The Jew's vocation is to 'stand,' the Christian's to 'go out'—both in the same cause of the kingdom of God. Judaism and Christianity thus represent one faith expressed in two religions—Judaism facing inward to the Jews, and Christianity facing outward to the Gentiles, who, through it, are brought to the God, and under the covenant, of Israel, and therefore cease to be Gentiles in the proper sense of the term. This is the unity of Judaism and Christianity, and this is why a Jew is able to see and acknowledge Jesus in his uniqueness as the way to the Father." Not all Christians and not all Jews will agree with Herberg, but it is a way of understanding that warrants the reflection that it provokes.

■ At first glance, it appeared that our Eastern Orthodox friends were going the way of all liberal flesh. A brochure from St. Vladimir's Press announces: "For the first time ever, English-speaking Orthodox Christians have a Bible written from an Orthodox perspective." The Bible is being rewritten from so many other perspectives, why complain if the Orthodox get in on the game? But we had rather expected more of them. They do, after all, make a point of being orthodox. As it turns out, the brochure promoting *The Orthodox Study Bible* meant to say that the *study guides* are written from an Orthodox perspective. Fair enough.

■ Everybody who writes much, and especially those of us who write too much, gets asked from time to time, Who have been the great influences on your thinking? Your scribe is eager to acknowledge his debts to a host of thinkers who have personally graced his life, including such as Richard Caemmerer, Reinhold Niebuhr, Abraham Joshua

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Heschel, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Joseph Ratzinger, and Alexander Schmemann. But any such listing runs the risk of unfairly leaving people out, for it seems that life has been one sustained and intensive conversation with thinkers from whom one has learned more than he is aware, and therefore more than he can acknowledge. Near the top of the list, however, if not at the very top, would have to be Arthur Carl Piepkorn. A Lutheran scholar of immense erudition, Piepkorn, who died in 1973, was for many years professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, this writer's alma mater. He was, among his many other achievements, a pioneer and major inspiration of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic theological dialogue. The intention of Lutheranism, Piepkorn taught, was to be a confessional movement within and for the Church of the West. Lutheranism became a separated church by accident and by what were perceived to be the theological and political necessities of the sixteenth century. Some students of Piepkorn, including this writer, subsequently became Roman Catholics, while most continue to strive within Lutheranism to turn that movement toward its constituting intention. To understand Piepkorn is to understand, in large part, the crisis of Protestantism at the edge of a new millennium—or at least those parts of Protestantism that claim the legacy of the sixteenth century Reformation. It is therefore with particular satisfaction that one notes the appearance of a new book, *The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn* (304 pp. $15). Edited and introduced by Michael Plekon and William Wiecher, and carrying an afterword by this writer, the book is published by the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, P.O. Box 327, Delhi, NY 13753.

Sources: Václav Havel on "The Post-Communist Nightmare," *New York Review of Books*, May 27, 1993. Jenny Teichman on Peter Singer and animal rights, *New Criterion*, April 1993. Ervin Duggan on censorship of obscenity, *Religion & Democracy*, September 1993. Mark C. Henrie on "Rethinking Conservatism in the 1990s," *Intercollegiate Review*, Spring 1993.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Thanks to Robert Wilken of the University of Virginia for item on Satan and monks. Bill Bolte quoted on the "right" to suicide in *USA Today*, February 24, 1993. Alan Wolfe on James Q. Wilson's *The Moral Sense* in *New Republic*, October 4, 1993. On religious broadcasting in Canada, *National and International Religion Report*, September 20, 1993. "Gay Lawyers Report on Workplace Bias" in *New York Law Journal*, September 17, 1993. Statistics on abortionists from *Care and Community*, a pro-life newsletter edited by Episcopalians, November 1993. Eugene Fisher on Jewish-Christian dialogue, *Pace*, May 1993.

Sparrow Falling

—on the death of a friend's husband

A shifting net of birds swelling
over the pasture, turning, an amoeba,
now dark and granular as dying, now
an invisible, a thin fluid slicing light.

Folding, the winged black knot splits.
Plunges. My heart tumbles in the dark, and
against the backlit sky I am a bird—one of
a crew of sparrows, a weightless ha'pennys-
worth.

We fly bunched, then abruptly string ourselves
parallel on threads of phone wires,
vibrating as a thousand voices hum
through our beads of claws. And off again.

My retina crowds with flight patterns
inking the hollow where wind has sucked
away, leaving the sky a great
stillness. God. These are not

words of birds. Some cries are black
beyond language. I feel, clotting
on my tongue like a shadow feather, a sparrow
is falling. A sparrow is falling.

Luci Shaw

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Are You Too Smart to Dismiss Old Screwtape?

Mark Twain said he didn't believe in Hell but was afraid he'd go there. Isn't that a problem with atheism and all those godless "isms" — Freudianism, hedonism, Marxism, etc. — that have fascinated apparently intelligent people? You just can't be sure there isn't a God, a Judgment, a Devil, and a Hell.

But isn't all that Heaven-and-Hell stuff a crutch for wimps and neurotics, an insult to one's intelligence?

Actually, there's a revival of interest in religion going on among the intelligentsia. And why not? Intellectuals have bought into every panacea and quack remedy to come down the pike, and are running out of substitutes for the Real Thing. Ostensibly bright people have pooh-poohed Hell, liberated themselves from morality, turned themselves into pooh-bahs, and created a Hell on earth for everyone else. Perhaps it's true that the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us he doesn't exist.

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An ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by George Will as "splendid," by *Newsweek* as "cheeky" (it takes cheek to mention Hell!), by *National Review* as "first-rate," by *Library Journal* as "brilliant," by the eminent evangelical theologian Carl F.H. Henry as "exceedingly well done," and by Christopher Derrick, England's foremost Catholic apologist and a pupil and long-time friend of C.S. Lewis, as "by far the best Catholic magazine in the English-speaking world." Frankly, we're "influential," to quote the *Los Angeles Times*.

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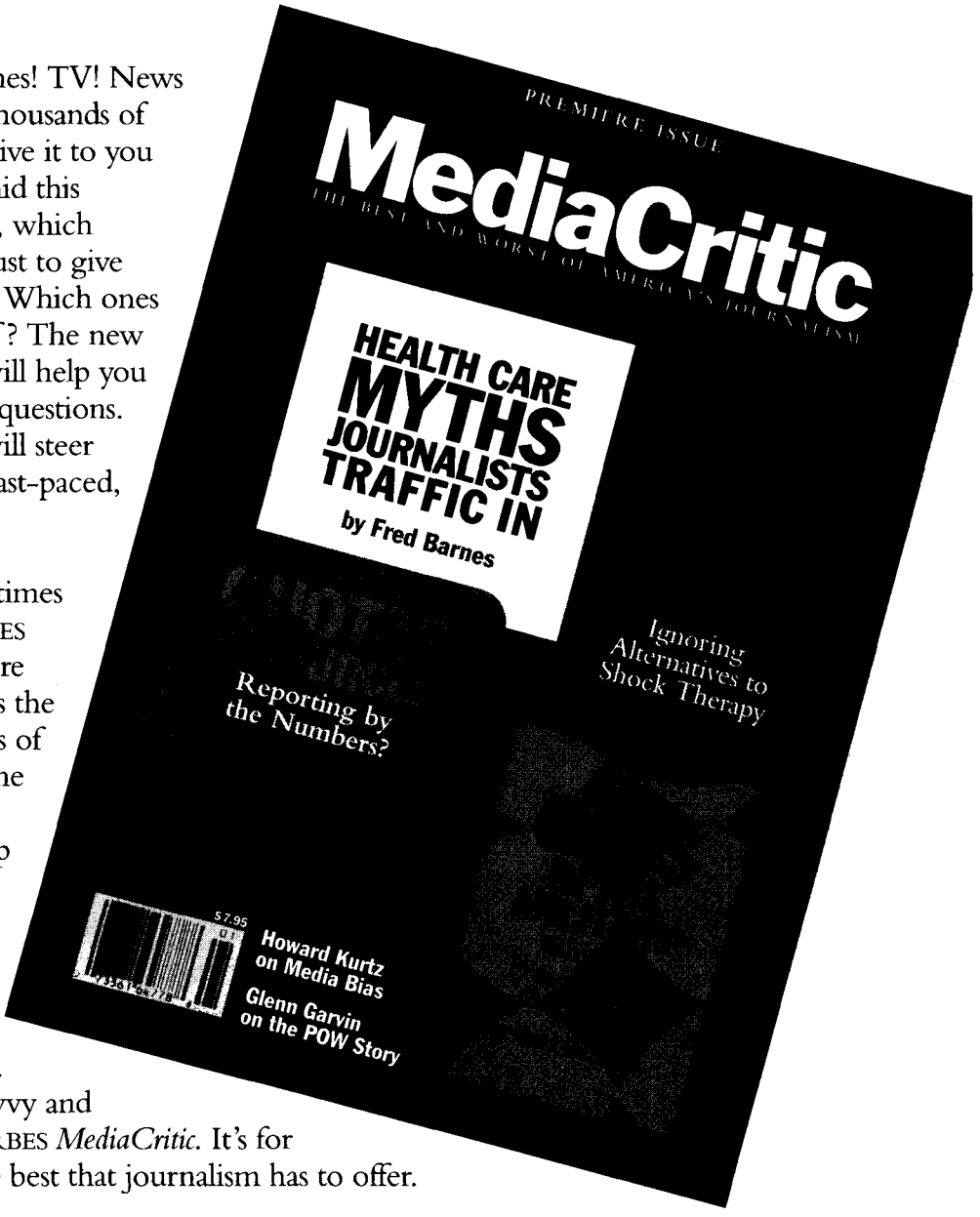

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